Never Gone II

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Sequel to Never Gone! Final chapter up! Five years have passed and the galaxy has seen many changes, as it is a period of rebuilding and renewal. But darkness lurks in the shadows. AnakinPadme, ObiWanOC, Luke, Leia, Han

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Never Gone II

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Changes for the Better

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AN: Hello readers and welcome to Never Gone II, the sequel to Never Gone. I hope you enjoy and please let me know what you think!

Age check:

Anakin: 25

Padme: 30

Obi-Wan: 41

Lea: 34

Luke and Leia: 5

Never Gone II

Chapter 1: Changes for the Better

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...

The galaxy is in a period of rebuilding and renewal. It has been a total of six years since Palpatine or Darth Sidious' death at the hands of Anakin Skywalker. For the most part, things have been relatively peaceful, with the exception of the always growing tension between Naboo and Cato-Neimodia. Anakin and Obi-Wan believe strongly that Aron Gunray is still in league with Count Dooku. The now Sith Master and his accomplices have not been seen nor heard from since their escape, however. The Jedi Order has continued to further deteriorate, as many Jedi have chosen to leave them in favor of employment under the Republic with Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi, who have become the Republic's top agents and officers.

Initially, Jedi began to leave when the Jedi Council became highly divided soon after Palpatine's death. The Council was severed on the issues of the Code mainly. Half wished for it to be rewritten to evoke much needed change and revitalization to what had become a stagnant order. The other half, which overruled, wished for the Code to remain the same. The initial leaving of Kit Fisto and Shaak Ti started the great rift in the Jedi Order. Initially, they took Aayla Secura, Nejaa Halcyon, who had already broken the code by taking a wife, Luminara Unduli, Barriss Offee, Serra Keto, and Bant Eerin. Since then, many of the younger knights began to stray away to what most were calling the new order which had been effectively dubbed Knights of the Galactic Republic. The old Council has been openly critical of the new order, because of their less traditional and relaxed ways. Our story begins five years after Obi-Wan's marriage to Lea Naberrie and nearly six years since Anakin's fateful slaying of Sith Master, Darth Sidious.

Mace Windu and Pablo Jill sat in Chancellor Organa's office. If there was one thing Mace had learned that he didn't like in the last five years, it was having no control over anything.

"Please Chancellor, the Jedi Temple was once a symbol of peace and pillar of strength. We are only asking for funding to make necessary repairs," Mace asked.

"I'm sorry Master Windu, I truly am. But the Senate does not feel that the use of credits toward repairing the Temple is a financial venture they are willing to take. I know that you have fought change, but perhaps it is time to consider it. The Jedi order is dying. You have less than ten infants in the crechling, because most do not approve of your methods regarding infants," Bail stated.

"We have less than ten infants in the crechling, because a certain Senator from Naboo proposed that preposterous bill that made it illegal for us to make a judgement on whether or not an infant should be admitted to our crechling. We do not steal babies! We only do what's best for them," Pablo Jill argued.

"What's best for them? Or what's best for the Order? That is the question raised and debated. The bill passed, because people would rather see that Force sensitive child make their own choice when they are old enough. And if they choose to be trained, they can be admitted to the Knights of the Galactic Republic. Your Order rejects children over the age of five, even though your numbers are dwindling," Bail reasoned.

"The Knights of the Galactic Republic are a joke. They are nothing but glorified police officers and security guards," Pablo Jill spat.

"The Knights of the Galactic Republic have dedicated themselves to serving our good galaxy. During the Clone Wars and before, Coruscant was a cesspool of crime and filth. In the last three years, crime has dropped forty percent and those numbers grow as the days pass. Whether it is stopping petty theft or killing Sith Lords, the KGR are glad to perform any duty, none of which they are *above* doing. The Knights of the Galactic Republic have earned my trust and the trust of the people. I am deeply sorry that I cannot help you," Bail said. Mace Windu and Pablo Jill rose and calmly exited his office.

"Governor Bibble, we will not sign that absurd treaty," Padme said, as calmly as she could to the Governor over the Holocom.

"Senator, I do not like it any more than you do. But if we do not sign it, then we have to consider building an active military. If Cato-Neimodia does invade, it will be worse than the blockade," Sio Bibble argued.

"Chancellor Organa has already promised full military support from Coruscant and Corellia should Aron Gunray be foolish enough to invade. In the meantime, the Queen and I will discuss the construction of a Nabooan military. But we will not sign his treaty, which would allow them to trade for our natural resources and minerals from our mons. They have nothing we need or want and I will not allow them to suck our natural resources dry. If we sign their

treaty, it would be the same as if they invaded and you know it," Padme replied.

"Then we need military presence in Theed," Bibble argued.

"I will speak with Senator Organa in the morning. Now, if you'll excuse me, I must end this meeting," Padme said.

"Of course Senator," Bibble replied, as the transmission blinked out.

Anakin entered Padme's office and shook his head when he saw her engrossed in some datapad and hunched over her desk. She glanced up and smiled at him. He came around her desk and planted a soft kiss on her lips.

"Hello to you too," Padme giggled, as he kissed her again, more passionately this time.

"What are you doing here already? We don't have to pick up the twins from school for a couple more hours," Padme said. Just a few short months ago, the twins had entered pre-grade school, which would prepare them for their entrance into the grade school the following year. Anakin and Padme had discussed whether or not it was safe for them to attend public school or get them private tutoring. Everyone knew whose children they were, but Anakin and Padme did not want that to control their lives. So, they had decided to allow them to attend public school in hopes of having something that resembled normalness. Since Anakin's work schedule was pretty much whatever he decided, he would often pick up the twins himself. If not, then it was usually Captain Typho accompanying Lea. Two years ago, Lea had a daughter that she and Obi-Wan named Jeena. Since then, Lea had taken to staying home with her and would continue to do so until Jeena got older. Lea often took the twins in the afternoons until Anakin and Padme came home.

"Well, I came to get my beautiful wife and take her to lunch before we go get the ankle biters," Anakin replied.

"Sounds wonderful. Anything to get out of this stuffy office. Can you believe that it's their fifth Life-Day already? Padme said.

"I know, it doesn't seem possible. I don't think I want them to grow up," Anakin replied, as he kissed her forehead.

"Me either," she replied, as she kissed him softly, before looping her arm in his and they left her office behind, work forgotten.

Anakin and Padme found a nice little café near Luke and Leia's school and ate lunch. Afterward, they set off on foot through a nearby city park, which would eventually lead them to the school.

"Things are getting serious Ani. What if Cato-Neimodia does invade? I can't put our people through that again," Padme said. Anakin squeezed her hand.

"I know that you don't like the idea of building a military, but maybe it is time to consider it. Naboo is a beautiful planet, with many riches and natural resources. Cato-Neimodia will probably not be the last to consider invading Naboo," Anakin said.

"You're right, I know you are. Naboo hasn't had a military in centuries. Governor Bibble is requesting military presence in Theed in the meantime. I just hope that it doesn't provoke a war," Padme replied.

"We have to hope that it will discourage an act of war, rather than provoke it," Anakin sighed.

"There is no easy solution to this, is there?" he asked.

"There never is my love. No matter what decision I make, some will not like it. Some will oppose me. And either decision could possibly have serious consequences on Naboo," Padme replied. Anakin wrapped his arm around her waist.

"You know that I'll always be here for you and that I'll always love you, right?" he asked. She smiled.

"Of course I do, it's what gets me through everything. Because I know that you'll always be there to hold me and kiss it all away," she replied, as she kissed him softly.

Obi-Wan, Lea, and their daughter Jeena waited on the landing platform at Republica 500. The ramp on the Nubian ship slowly lowered and first down the ramp were fourteen-year-old Ryoo and ten-year-old Pooja. The girls were a bubble of energy, as usual, and quickly ran to greet Obi-Wan and Lea with hugs. Sola and Darred were next, followed by Owen and Beru. And finally, Ruwee, Jobal, Cliegg and Shmi descended the ramp.

"It's so good to you both," Sola said, as she hugged them.

"It's good to see you too Sola," Lea said. Sola's attention turned to the little girl in Obi-Wan's arms.

"Oh, she's grown so much. Jeena, come see aunt Sola," Sola said, holding out her arms. Jeena giggled and let her father hand her over to her aunt.

"Look at this strawberry blonde hair," Sola said, as she ruffled her fingers through the small child's hair.

"And these hazel blue eyes. Somebody takes after her daddy," Sola said. Jeena giggled, as Sola tickled her tummy. Lea smiled and wrapped her arm around Obi-wan's waist.

"Well, she may have my coloring, but she's going to be as beautiful as her mother," Obi-Wan replied.

"Well, let's get upstairs. Dorme, Eirtae, and Sache are setting things up for the Life-Day party. Anakin and Padme went to get the guest's of honor from school, so they should be back anytime," Lea said.

Luke and Leia Skywalker sat side-by-side at their desks. They had often been told that they didn't really look like twins, but were more like miniature copies of their parents. But it was their mannerisms and closeness that showed they were twins. They teased and bickered with each other like any other siblings. But they were also very close and fiercely protective of each other, just like their parents were fiercely protective of them. Luke and Leia had a few friends and were genuinely likeable children. Some were intimidated by them, but mostly they got along well with others. Class was dismissed and as usual, they both headed for the patch of artificial trees on the outskirts of the school where someone was always waiting for them. Unfortunately, like in every school, there was always a bully. And this was one always took personal delight in tormenting the twins.

"Well, if it isn't the Skywalker pipsqueaks," fifteen-year-old Han Solo taunted, as he grabbed Leia's satchel off her shoulder and held it above her head. Han was a Corellian military brat. His father was a harsh Corellian general in the Corellian Navy and was recently transferred to Coruscant. He was harsh and usually bullied Han, thus why Han usually took to bullying others. And Luke and Leia were his favorite targets, mostly because his father hated most politicians, especially pacifist ones. He also hated Jedi and the Knights of the Galactic Republic.

"Hey, give it back you nerfeherder!" Leia yelled. Han smirked.

"Come and get it princess," he taunted.

"Give it back Han!" Luke yelled.

"Whatcha gonna do about it short stuff?" Han taunted and his buddies laughed. Han drew his arm back and tossed the bag away. Luke used the Force to stop the satchel in mid air and floated it to his sister.

"Thanks Lukie," Leia said. Han glared, as he watched Luke use the Force.

"Did daddy teach you that? Get out of here, you little freaks!" Han yelled. Luke and Leia scowled at him and walked away.

"Why does he have to be so mean?" Leia huffed.

"He's just mad, cause he can't use the Force and we made him look bad in front of his buddies," Luke replied. Luke and Leia rounded the corner and saw their parents waiting for them. They grinned and ran to them excitedly. Anakin and Padme embraced them happily. Then, together with the twins between them, they strolled through the park and back to their family speeder.

"Happy Life-Day you two. How was school today?" Padme asked them both, as they walked through the park together as a family.

"It was good, except this mean boy that always bothers us," Leia said. Anakin's attention peaked at the word 'boy' coming from his little girl.

"Boy? What boy?" Anakin asked.

"He's just a boy that likes to pick on us," Luke replied.

"How old is this boy?" Padme asked.

"Fifteen." Leia answered.

"Fifteen? Why is a fifteen-year-old boy picking on five-year-olds?" Padme wondered.

"He picks on everybody mommy, he's a bully," Luke replied.

"Well, that's no excuse. Maybe we should talk to his parents," Padme said.

"What's this boy's name?" Anakin asked.

"Han Solo," Leia answered. Anakin winced.

"Well, then it won't do much good to talk to his father, angel," Anakin said.

"You know him?" Padme asked.

"Well, I know of him. He's a General in the Republic Navy from Corellia. He's kind of a brute and he *hates* the KGR and Jedi for that matter. He's also not a big fan of politicians," Anakin replied.

"So, he's basically an overgrown bully, who probably bullies his own son, which is probably why the boy bullies others. And Luke and Leia are his favorite targets, because of us," Padme surmised.

"You're good," Anakin replied.

"Only because I know the type. I was afraid that something like this would happen if we sent the twins to public school," Padme lamented. Anakin slipped his arm around her waist, while the twins walked in front of them.

"Hey, besides this kid, Luke and Leia really like school," Anakin replied.

"You're right, I suppose we can't shelter them from everything," Padme said.

"As much as I wish we could, I know that we can't," Anakin replied. Suddenly, Anakin heard a commotion behind them and realized that the Holonet reporters had discovered their little outing in the park.

"Looks like the vultures have found us," Anakin said. Padme nodded, as she picked Luke up and Anakin picked Leia up so they could walk faster. They reached their speeder and strapped the twins in the backseat, before getting in and taking off.

Luke and Leia each blew out their set of five candles that adorned the large cake that Jobal and Shmi had baked. Everyone clapped

and Padme kissed both her children on the cheek. She stepped back with Anakin and they watched fondly, as their children opened their gifts. Both sets of grandparents doted on their grandchildren and soon the hour grew late. Obi-Wan held an already sleeping Jeena, as he and Lea prepared to return to their apartment down the hall. Sola, Darred and the girls followed them, as they were staying in the guest rooms, as were Owen and Beru. Shmi, Cliegg, Ruwee and Jobal were staying in the guest rooms at Anakin and Padme's. After kissing their grandchildren goodnight, the two older couples retired for the evening.

"All right you two, you've had a big night, so it's bedtime," Padme told them. Luke looked up from his new toy.

"Ah, but mommy, we don't have school tomorrow," Luke whined.

"No buts sweetheart. Go brush your teeth," Padme ordered. Reluctantly, the sleepy twins obeyed.

Artoo rolled into the twins room and tucked himself in the corner. He turned on his small light, which served as a nightlight for the twins. Padme and Anakin tucked them in tightly. Their eyes were already drooping shut, as Padme kissed them both.

"Good night my angels," she said.

"Night mommy," they chorused. Anakin leaned down and kissed them each on the forehead.

"Good night my little man and my little princess," Anakin told them.

"Night daddy," they chorused. Together, Anakin and Padme closed their door quietly and headed for their own bedroom.

Anakin watched her fondly, as she sat at her vanity, brushing out her long curls. She looked back and smiled at him.

"You're staring again, my love," she teased.

"I'm sorry, but I can't help it. You captivate me. You always have and you always will," he replied. Even after nearly six wonderful years of marriage, he still had the ability to make her blush. She stood up and shed her robe, leaving her in a long sky blue nightgown, which hugged her every curve perfectly. Anakin pulled back the sheets and she climbed in next to him, cuddling close. Anakin kissed her tenderly, in a series of short, soft kisses. He pressed his lips tightly to hers and traced his tongue along her bottom lip. She eagerly parted her lips, allowing his silky tongue to invade her mouth. His tongue searched for hers and their tongues collided in a sensual rhythm. Padme felt those familiar tingles that she always felt throughout her entire body when he kissed her. His lips moved to her neck, leaving a trail of fire in their wake, as he slowly kissed lower. Their breathing became ragged, as they surrendered to the unbridled passion between them. Reaching into the Force, Anakin turned out the light...

A distant, unchartered planet in the outer rim...

He had come to this unnamed planet five years ago. Using his birth given wealth, he built a very large estate on a flat plane of the normally very rocky, arid planet. It was here for the last five years that he and his constituents were plotting their revenge. It was here that he had begun training his Sith apprentices. Yes, as the Sith master now, he had broken the rule by training not one apprentice, but many. His crimson saber clashed furiously with his top apprentice, whom he'd found four years ago. She was a Force sensitive Twi'lek and he had found her among other Twi'lek slaves on a slave transport coming from Ryloth. The transport had stopped on the planet he had happened to be hiding on to refuel for it's final destination of Tatooine. She was a red skinned Twilek, young and full of anger. He bought her from the slaver and immediately began her training. He showed her no mercy and taught her to act and feed on her anger. Out of all his apprentices', she was the fiercest and

cruelest, with the a thirst for the blood of anything good and pure. But she had trouble controlling her anger when he needed her to.

"You've dropped your shields. How many times have I told you how important it is to keep yourself shielded until the time is right!" Dooku yelled.

"Is the time ever going to be *right* master?" she jeered.

"Yes, the time is nearly Darth Malina, but we must not expose ourselves prematurely," Dooku replied.

"You really think that even the glorious Chosen One could sense us out here on this barren rock? I don't think so," she replied with a cocky smirk.

"Do NOT underestimate him or your death will be the result!" Dooku said, as he slashed furiously and knocked her on her back.

"You will continue to follow my lead, my young apprentice," he told her. She scowled at him, but locked her mind shields down tight.

"Yes my master," she replied, as she left the training room in a storm. Dooku smiled slightly, knowing that if anyone could, she would be the one to kill the Chosen One...

A Celebration of Freedom

Disclaimer: It's George's sandbox. I just play here, cause it's fun!

AN: Thanks for all the great reviews! Here's chapter 2! Enjoy and let me know what you think!

Never Gone

Chapter 2: A Celebration of Freedom

Luke squirmed and wiggled impatiently, as his mother straightened his bow tie.

"Luke, stop squirming. You're going to wrinkle your tux," Padme scolded.

"Why do I hafta wear a stupid tux. I hate 'em," Luke complained. Padme sighed.

"Stop whining like a little baby Lukie," Leia teased.

"I'm not a baby! Mom, tell her I'm not a baby!" Luke whined.

"Leia, what have we told you about name calling?" Padme asked.

"Sorry Lukie," she replied, not meaning it in the slightest.

"You don't mean it," Luke accused.

"Do too,"

"Do not,"

"Do too,"

"Do not,"

"Do too,"

"Do not,"

Padme sighed deeply, as the twins argued.

"Stop it, both of you. I expect you both to be on your best behavior tonight at the celebration," Padme said sternly.

"What's the celebration for again mommy?" Leia asked.

"It's nearing the anniversary of the day the Sith Lord was defeated. You've heard the stories," Padme replied.

"Yeah! That was when daddy beat him, right!" Luke shouted in excitement. He loved all the stories about how his father had defeated some of the worst assassins and criminals in the galaxy.

"Yes Luke, it was. And your father and I think you are both old enough to start attending the anniversary celebrations with us," Padme replied.

"Does the Republic celebrate every year mommy?" Leia asked.

"Yes we do sweetheart. Freedom is something that never comes easy and so we celebrate it to remind ourselves of how precious it is," Padme told her daughter, as she smoothed her little girl's light blue formal dress. She glanced over at Luke, who was busy playing with his toy star fighters.

"Luke, don't get dirty. Why don't you go wait with your father out in the sitting room, while I braid your sister's hair," Padme suggested. In a burst of energy, Luke went bounding out of the room. Padme shook her head in amusement. He was so much like Anakin at times, it was scary.

Luke came bounding out into the sitting room, while tugging at his bow tie.

"Lookin' good in that tux, little man," Anakin said, as he scooped his rambunctious boy into his arms. Anakin put Luke down and straightened his tux. Luke then tried to stand patiently next to his father, but he was very bored waiting for his mother and sister.

"There, all done," Padme said, as she finished looping Leia's braids around at the back of her head. Padme was wearing her hair in a similar style and only needed to slip into her gown.

"Go show daddy how pretty you look and mommy will be out in a few minutes," Padme told her. Leia smiled and quickly left for the sitting room.

Anakin smiled, as Leia twirled in her dress for him.

"You look beautiful princess," Anakin said, as he knelt down and kissed her forehead.

"Thank you daddy," Leia replied sweetly. She glanced at her brother, who was sitting on the sofa, swinging his legs.

"Luke, doesn't your sister look pretty?" Anakin asked. Luke looked over and shrugged his shoulders. Leia glared at him.

"Luke," Anakin warned.

"You look pretty Leia," he replied. Leia carefully smoothed down the back of her dress, before sitting down, like Padme had taught her. A few moments later, Padme came out, dressed in an elegant black dress. The collar dipped low in a v-shape. The dress was long and slim, fitting to her curves perfectly. The back of the dress dipped in a wider v-shape and the dress slit up both sides, stopping at the knees.

"Wow, you look amazing," Anakin said, as he kissed her softly.

"Thank you. You're looking very handsome yourself," Padme replied. Anakin loaded the twins into the back of the speeder and strapped them in, before they drove off for the Senate building.

The entrance, as always, was swarming with Holonet reporters. Luke and Leia walked a few steps in front of their parents, holding hands. Anakin escorted Padme on his arm, as they climbed the steps to the entrance. The Holonet reporters began shouting questions upon the arrival of the Skywalker family. Anakin and Padme paid them no mind, as usual. Their questions were usually about the current bills Padme was fighting on the floor and the constant criticisms they were given by the Jedi Council, among other things. The gossip reporters, as usual, wished to try and pry into their personal lives. Padme had taught Anakin long ago to simply respond with a "no comment". She had told him that it was likely any other response he had would simply be taken out of context or misconstrued. Anakin pushed forcefully through them, ushering his family ahead of him. Once inside, they looked around and found the Kenobi family waiting for them at their table. During the meal, Senator Organa made the usual speech. He graciously thanked everyone for their dedication and service to the Republic. He then honored Anakin for his defeat of the Sith , as he usually did and much to Anakin's embarrassment. The embarrassment extended to Obi-Wan, who was also honored for his vital role in the preservation of the Republic. After dinner and the speeches were done, the mingling began and soft music played in the background, inviting people to dance. Not long after dinner, little Jeena was already asleep on her father's shoulder. Lea brushed her daughter's strawberry blonde locks from her face.

"Are you sure you don't mind?" Lea asked Dorme.

"Not at all. You know Eirtae and I both adore her. You and Obi-Wan deserve a night out once in a while," Dorme replied.

"She's right love," Obi-Wan said, as he handed Jeena to Dorme.

"The same goes for you milady. If the twins get tired, you just need to call us," Dorme said. Padme smiled.

"Thank you Dorme," Padme replied, as Dorme was escorted out by Captain Typho. While Padme and Lea engaged in an animated conversation with Bail, Anakin and Obi-Wan went to visit with Aayla, Kit, and Shaak Ti.

Shaak Ti watched fondly, as Luke and Leia scampered around with a few other children, particularly with Bail's adopted daughter, Kira, whom the twins got along famously with.

"They're growing so fast Anakin," Shaak Ti said fondly.

"I know. I don't think I want them to grow up," Anakin replied, as he watched them play.

"Where's your little girl, Obi-Wan?" Kit asked.

"She's already asleep for the night. She doesn't have the stamina that the twins have yet. Nor did she have any sugary drinks like the ones I know Anakin slipped to the twins earlier," Obi-Wan teased. Anakin winced.

"You weren't supposed to see that," Anakin replied.

"I'm not the one you need to worry about. You had better hope Padme did not see it," Obi-Wan replied.

"Shh...she has super sonic hearing, you know," Anakin joked. They all laughed.

"Besides, it's a special occasion," Anakin replied. Obi-Wan shook his head in amusement.

Bail Organa bowed respectfully, as Master Windu approached him, flanked by Master Jill and Master Kuro. He glanced around briefly

and saw that Yoda was enjoying himself watching some of the children that were here. If there was one thing he knew about master Yoda, it was that he loved children.

"Masters," Bail greeted.

"Greetings Chancellor," Master Windu said, before his eyes shifted to Padme.

"Senator," Mace greeted stiffly. Padme had to resist the urge to shiver under their cold stares. Nearly four years ago, she had successfully pushed the bill the made it illegal to take children from their parents without consent. She was harshly criticized by the Council, because she only drew up the bill after the Council had come to their home one afternoon and nearly succeeded in taking her babies away...

The Senate had adjourned for the day. Anakin and Obi-Wan were still in meetings at the KGR headquarters, which was currently located within the Senate building until a location could be chosen. The meetings were regarding two senior padawans that had decided to leave the order. Scout and Whie had fallen in love, despite their masters objections. Whie was the padawan to Master Kuro and Scout was recently assigned to Master Jill after her other master had died fighting in the Clone Wars a couple years earlier. Being ones with the most experience with these kinds of feelings, Anakin and Obi-Wan were meeting the two young people to ease their fears. Padme was home with the twins now, while Lea and Dorme had gone to the market. Padme smiled, as she watched eighteen-month old twins play on the floor with their toys on their favorite blanket, which Shmi had knitted for them. They chatted to each other and Padme could only discern certain words here and there, while the rest remained a gibberish of baby speak. She liked to call it their twin speak, since they seemed to understand each other. The door indicator chimed and Padme got up to answer it. She did not, however, expect to see three Jedi Masters behind it.

" *Masters," Padme greeted.*

" *Senator," Mace nodded.*

" *I'm afraid neither Anakin nor Obi-Wan are here at the moment," Padme replied. Mace looked down at the floor briefly, before bringing his eyes up to meet hers again.*

" *We are not here to see Anakin or Obi-Wan," Mace replied. Fear crept up inside Padme.*

" *I think you know why we're here Senator," Master Kuro said, as she stepped into the apartment uninvited. In her head, she called out to Anakin, like he had taught her to if she was ever in trouble.*

" *You can't just barge in here and take my children," Padme replied.*

" *Republic law states that if the child's midichlorian count exceeds twelve thousand, then the child is to be taken into the custody of the order," Master Jill stated.*

" *And you happen to have two," Master Kuro added. Padme bristled.*

" *I am well informed concerning Republic law. You also must know that the law you speak of has come under heavy scrutiny. Chancellor Organa has suspended the law until further investigation can commence. You will not take my children from me and your mind tricks will not work on me," Padme replied, sternly staring at Master Kuro. Kuro glared at her, before stepping toward her. Padme couldn't help but to flinch, for the dark woman, as she was often called, wore a cruel snarl and carried a menacing presence.*

" *Senator, the Council believes that taking the children is in their best interest. They each have a high midichlorian count and will need to be trained properly," Mace stated.*

" *My husband and I will decide what is best for them. And he and Obi-Wan will see to their training if the twins decide that is what they*

want when they are old enough," Padme said. She was growing increasingly worried though, as none of the Jedi seemed to be backing down. Luke and Leia seemed to pick up on her distress, as they pulled themselves up on their little legs and toddled clumsily to her, whimpering. She pulled them into her arms and hugged them both.

" *You are only making this harder on yourself and the children Senator," Master Kuro stated. At that moment, she heard her husband's speeder land on the veranda and she sighed with relief. Luke and Leia's started to calm down and their sobs reduced to whimpers. They always felt safe in the presence of their father, just like she did.*

" *Padme!" Anakin called, as he stormed into the apartment, followed by Obi-Wan.*

" *What's going on?" Anakin demanded, as he glared at the three Jedi Masters that had his wife cornered.*

" *We're only here performing our duty. Republic law states that they are to be handed over to the order. Not even you, the mighty Chosen One, can break the law," Master Kuro sneered.*

" *That law you speak of is being held in question. But even if it wasn't, the only way you would ever take our children would be over my dead body," Anakin said coldly. The three Jedi Masters were quick to leave, as they knew they would be literally thrown out otherwise. Once they had left, Padme's resolve faded and she let her husband's strong embrace catch her.*

" *Please...don't let them take our babies," Padme cried.*

" *Never angel, they'll never take them from us," Anakin said he held his family close. And they hadn't. Padme was determined that no other mother would ever feel the fear of losing their children again. She wrote the bill in just two days and it quickly made it to the floor, thanks to her confiding in Bail about what had happened and how*

truly close to her heart this was. As it turned out, many agreed with her bill...

Since the day the bill had passed, those on the Council and most Jedi still loyal to the old ways were very cold to her. They held she and Anakin responsible for their dying order, when really it was their own fault and inability to change that was killing them.

"Masters," Padme greeted politely.

"We were just discussing the Senator's proposal on Anti-slavery," Bail mentioned.

"Yes, I read the proposal. It is a noble, but daresay bold attempt to shut down slave trade rings in the outer rim," Mace replied.

"Yes, are you sure the KGR is up to such an undertaking?" Master Jill asked.

"My proposal is still in the very early stages and has many long-term goals. Some of which may not be realized for a few years. But both my husband and I believe strongly in this proposal. Slavery is wrong and it is time to put an end to it, and not just within the Republic," Padme replied.

"This bill seems close to your heart. Just like the other bill you passed that has succeeded in killing our order," Master Kuro said coldly.

"I am not responsible for your dying order, nor is my husband. I only set out to make sure no mother would ever feel the way I did again when you tried to take our twins away," Padme replied.

"I believe it is best that we move on. Good evening Senator, Chancellor," Mace said, as he and his accomplices bowed and walked away. Padme sighed and was about to go find Anakin when

she felt a tap on her shoulder. She turned and met the dark eyes of a tall, dark haired man.

"Hello Senator," he greeted. Padme gave him a puzzled expression.

"I'm sorry, but do I know you?" she asked.

"It has been a long time. The last time I saw you, I was going off to become an artist and you were going to become princess of Theed," the man replied, with a smile.

"Palo? I'm sorry, I didn't recognize you," Padme replied.

"No apologies necessary, milady. You are as beautiful as ever," Palo said smoothly, as he kissed the back of her hand.

"Thank you Palo, you are very kind. But I must say I am curious as to what brings you to Coruscant?" she asked. Palo smiled, as Chancellor Organa spoke.

"I have hired him as a personal aid," Bail said.

"You've returned to politics?" Padme asked.

"Yes, unfortunately, being an artist was not paying the bills. A few years ago, I came to Coruscant and entered the University. Chancellor Organa was kind enough to offer me a position. It's starting at the bottom, but I'm sure I'll work my way up," Palo said.

"Palo came highly recommended and was at the top of his class," Bail said.

"Congratulations on your position. Oh, I forgot to introduce you. Palo, this is my cousin, Lea Kenobi," Padme said.

"It's nice to meet you Lea," Palo greeted.

"It's nice to meet you too," Lea replied. The idle conversation continued, as the soft music wafted around them.

Anakin felt a tug at his sleeve. He looked down into the doe brown eyes of his little girl.

"Daddy, Lukie won't dance with me," Leia complained. Anakin glanced over and saw that his son was busy playing with a couple other boys his age. He smiled down at his daughter.

"Well, how about I dance with you?" Anakin asked.

"Really?" she asked, her face lighting up.

"Sure princess. If you'll excuse us," he said, tossing a grin to Obi-Wan and the others. Anakin smiled, as he twirled his little girl. He held her hands, as they swayed to the music. The lurking Holonet reporters were eating the cute scene up and caught the moments on film, but Anakin nor Leia paid them any mind. Padme had stopped talking to smile at them fondly.

"Your daughter is beautiful Padme, she looks just like you," Palo mentioned.

"Thank you Palo," Padme replied.

"I would very much like to meet your family," Palo said, as the song ended and Anakin headed their way, with Leia's small hand in his own.

"Of course. Luke, come over here for a few minutes," Padme called. Luke scrambled over to his mother.

"Palo, this is my husband, Anakin Skywalker. And these are our twins Luke and Leia. Palo is an old friend," Padme introduced. Luke and Leia said hi shyly, before they scampered off to play.

"It's nice to meet you Anakin," Palo greeted with a handshake.

"Nice to meet you too," Anakin replied. Padme smiled and took his hand.

"If you'll excuse us, but my husband and I haven't shared even one dance tonight," Padme said, as she pulled Anakin out to the dance floor with her.

Luke and Leia sat in couple chairs off to the side, sharing some Shurra fruit they had gotten from the food table.

"Well, I thought I might see you pipsqueaks here," Han said, as he stood over them.

"Ugh, leave us alone nerfherder," Leia said.

"And what if I don't princess? You gonna go tell daddy on me?" Han mocked. Leia fumed.

"Maybe I will laser brain!" she retorted.

Anakin held Padme tightly in his arms, as they swayed gently to the music.

"So *that's* Palo," Anakin said.

"Yes. You're not jealous, are you?" Padme asked, in a teasing tone.

"No...not at all," Anakin replied, nonchalantly.

"Good. Cause if you were, I might have to tell you how much I love you and only you," she said, as she pecked him on the lips.

"And I might have to tell you how handsome I think you are," she said, as she kissed him again.

"And then, I might have to tell you how sexy I think you are," she said, as she kissed him again.

"Well, we wouldn't want *that,* " Anakin joked. She giggled, as she snaked her arms around his neck and kissed him again.

"We're kissing in public...again," Anakin warned. She ignored him, as her lips moved over his.

"Let them take their holos," Padme replied.

"You always say that..." he paused, as she kissed him again.

"Then you'll be complaining tomorrow, because we're all over the Holonet," Anakin warned.

"Just shut up and kiss me Ani," she replied. Anakin shrugged and slanted his lips over hers in a deep, passionate kiss.

"Why are you here anyway Han?" Luke asked.

"My dad's a General, ya' know. Pretty important guy, so he drags me along to these things. What about you guys? Aren't little babies like you supposed to be in bed by now?" Han teased. Luke rolled his eyes and Leia fumed again.

"We're not babies! Mommy and daddy said we're old enough to come now, so go away nerfherder!" Leia yelled.

"Whatever you say *princess* ," Han mocked. Han walked off, in search of his father. He didn't have to guess where his dad was, for he was at the bar nursing Corellian brandy, as usual.

"The twins are getting sleepy," Padme said.

"Yeah, I think it's time to call it a night," Anakin replied. They stepped off the dance floor and rounded their twins up. The Skywalker's and Kenobi's departed the Senate building and headed for home.

Palo looked around, making sure no one could see him, before he slipped into a vacant office. He switched on the holocom and the face of Willhuff Tarkin appeared.

"What do you have to report?" Tarkin asked.

"The Chancellor has hired me as his personal aid. They all bought my story and no one suspects anything," Palo reported.

"Excellent, we'll be in contact soon," Tarkin replied, as the transmission winked out. An evil smile marred Palo's face...

Calm Before the Storm

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars. It all belongs to George.

AN: Here's chapter 3! Thanks for all the great reviews!

Never Gone II

Chapter 3: Calm Before the Storm

Obi-Wan opened his eyes, as he stood on the veranda of their apartment. He finished his meditation and headed for the kitchen.

"Daddy!" Jeena greeted, as she sat in her high chair.

"Good morning sweetheart," Obi-Wan said, kissing her forehead. Lea set a cup of caf on the table for him.

"Good morning, love," Obi-Wan greeted, with a soft kiss.

"Morning," Lea said, as they sat down to eat breakfast together.

"Do you have classes to teach today?" Lea asked.

"Just a couple of saber training classes with some of the senior padawans. Anakin begins training the rookies entering the Republic academy today, so that should be quite interesting," Obi-Wan replied.

"Those poor kids," Lea joked. It was a well known fact that flying with Anakin Skywalker could scare the hell out of anyone. But he was the best and the Republic army wanted their pilots learning from him. They finished breakfast and Obi-Wan got ready to go. He kissed his wife and daughter goodbye.

"I have a morning class and an afternoon class, but there is about a two hour break in between," Obi-Wan said.

"Well, maybe Jeena and I will come join you for lunch," Lea replied.

"That would be wonderful, as long as you don't mind eating cafeteria food," Obi-Wan said.

"It's not too bad," Lea replied, trying to be nice. Obi-Wan raised his eyebrow.

"You're being kind. There's things that not even Anakin will eat there," Obi-Wan joked. Lea giggled.

"Well, how about I just bring us a picnic lunch and we can eat in the garden?" Lea asked.

"Again, that would be wonderful, my love," Obi-Wan replied, as he kissed her again and left.

The old Senate Hall building. It had once housed the Senate centuries ago, before the larger, Senate Rotunda had been built. Originally, the Republic was going to tear the building down and build the new one over it. However, they decided to leave it and build the new building beside it, since the old Senate Hall building held so much history. Over the years, the building became old and rundown and remained that way until the KGR chose to renovate it into their new headquarters. Now, the smaller building gleamed brilliantly alongside the Senate Rotunda and was home to the Knights of the Galactic Republic, loved by the good and innocent and feared by the cruel and wicked. Obi-Wan strolled down the halls, greeting those as he passed by. He came to one of the training rooms and found Kit Fisto teaching a class of younglings. Each had t heir practice saber and were blocking blasts from their remote.

"Good morning Obi-Wan," Kit greeted, with a big grin.

"Good morning Kit," Obi-Wan greeted.

"Morning master Obi-Wan!" the younglings greeted.

"Good morning children," Obi-Wan greeted back.

"If you're looking for Anakin, he's not here," Kit said.

"Oh?" Obi-Wan questioned. Kit nodded and dismissed the younglings. Then, he and Obi-Wan ventured through the halls, heading for the meeting room.

"Shaak Ti and Whie got a lead on De'jak this morning," Kit said.

"The drug Lord?" Obi-Wan asked.

"One in the same. Anakin left to help, as we don't think De'jak will go down easily," Kit replied.

"No, I'm sure he won't. He's outrun us for nearly two years already. If we catch him, breaking down his drug ring will be that much easier," Obi-Wan mentioned.

"We hope. Shaak Ti and Whie have tracked him to the lower levels. They suspect that he's expecting a shipment of illegal spices and other drug chemicals from the outer rim," Kit replied.

"Well, if he does give chase, then there's no one crazier than Anakin to hunt him down. He won't stand a chance," Obi-Wan laughed.

Anakin crouched behind a couple of crates in the dirty alley. He had De'jak in his sights, who was currently having several of his men unload several crates that he was positive had spices and chemicals in them. Anakin clicked his comlink on and spoke quietly into it.

"Move in," he ordered. The sound of several light sabers humming to life surrounded the criminals. De'jak swore something in some unknown language and bolted for his speeder. Anakin rolled his eyes. Why did they always run? De'jak sped away in his speeder and Anakin hopped on a nearby swoop bike, taking off after him.

"Detain them! Let's go Whie!" Shaak Ti ordered to the other Knights, before she and Whie took off after Anakin.

Anakin punched the throttle down and took the swoop bike to startling speeds, as he wove through Coruscant traffic after De'jak. Anakin sped up beside De'jak's speeder, and the drug Lord rammed the side of his speeder into Anakin's bike. They pulled apart, as they swivelled through the dangerous, oncoming traffic. Anakin growled and swooped around rammed into his speeder. De'jak drew his blaster and fired. Anakin dodged the blasts and then used the Force to pull the blaster from his hand. De'jak cursed and swerved violently to avoid the oncoming speeders. Anakin expertly wove through them and then aimed the blaster at his speeder's thrusters. The thrusters exploded and the engine died, causing his speeder to crash into an alley. De'jak stumbled out and was about to run, but Anakin was already there in front of him. He grabbed the man and punched him in the jaw.

"No more running for you De'jak. You're going to prison for a very long time," Anakin said, as he hauled the man to the speeder that was landing. Whie hopped out and placed the stun cuffs on him and shoved him into the back of the speeder. Whie kept watch on the man back there, as Anakin hopped into the driver's seat of the speeder. Shaak Ti smiled.

"Good morning Anakin," she greeted.

"Morning Shaak. Morning Whie," Anakin greeted, with a smile, as he fired up the engines and sped off for headquarters.

De'jak was immediately booked and put in prison, where he would await trial and sentencing. Anakin headed off to the Senate building to meet the newest pilot's entering the academy. Along the way, he received friendly nods and smiles, as most had heard about his high speed chase and capture of one of Coruscant's biggest drug Lord's. He made his way to the flight simulation room, where fifteen rookies waited at attention. He normally didn't like all the formality that came

with the military, but when they asked him to train potential future pilots for the Republic, it was an offer he could not refuse. He stepped in and saw that General Solo was there and had probably just finished some inane lecture. Anakin realized that these were probably his recruits and the good general would spend the next several minutes trying to lecture him on how to teach them.

"Knight Skywalker, I am General Solo and these are my boys. Don't be afraid to be hard on 'em, they're tough, especially my boy Han here," the General said, as he patted Han soundly on the back. Anakin didn't miss the wince on Han's face, even though the boy tried his best to hide it. Anakin suppressed an icy stare for the General and nodded.

"I'm sure they'll do fine, General," Anakin replied. General Solo nodded.

"I wasn't sure about having you teach the boys and all, ya' know, being that you have those crazy powers. But they all insist you're the best, so I expect top notch results," the General replied, as he saluted his boys and left. Anakin had suppress a growl and released his anger into the Force.

"Okay, at ease. I'm not one for the formality of rank or protocol," Anakin said, as he pointed out into space.

"Because out there, none of that matters. Your skills are what matter when you are in a star ship and the enemy does not care if you are an ensign or a four star general," Anakin said. He heard Han snort, but he ignored it this time.

"We'll start by going over the routine checks that a pilot must make before taking his craft into flight," Anakin said. Han snorted again and Anakin sighed.

"Is there a problem, Mr. Solo?" Anakin asked.

"I came here to learn how to be a pilot. Checkin' the ship is what astromechs are for," Han replied, smartly.

"What happens if your astromech is damaged in a battle? You will need to know how to do these checks yourself if you want to stay alive," Anakin replied. Han just snorted again.

"Everyone to your simulators," Anakin ordered. He had a feeling he would have trouble with Han. Still, he didn't believe that Han was a bad kid. And he strongly felt that the good General had a lot to do with Han's behavior. Perhaps what Han needed most, was someone to truly listen to him and mentor him. Anakin decided that Han might be a hard one to crack, but he would do his best to reach this kid if he could.

"Chancellor Organa, Senator Amidala-Skywalker is here for your meeting," Organa's secretary informed him over the comm system.

"Thank you, please send her in Lydia," Bail replied.

"Hello Padme," Bail greeted politely.

"Hello Bail," Padme greeted in return.

"I see you've come to discuss putting a military presence in Theed," Bail said.

"Yes, as much as I hate it, Naboo's relations with Cato-Neimodia are on shaky grounds at best. We have no weapons and though I pray to the Force that they will not invade, I cannot consciously allow harm to come to my people if there is something I can do to prevent it. My proposal for creating a military will take the floor in parliament in a few weeks, at which I plan to be present. But until then, I request a military presence in Theed for protection," Padme said. Bail smiled slightly.

"You have nothing to worry about Padme, your request is granted. I will have one of our Generals dispatch a military frigate to Naboo tomorrow morning," Bail replied.

"Thank you Bail. This has been a hard decision for me, but I can't see any other way to ensure my planet's safety, other than creating a military," Padme replied.

"I know Padme, I feel the same way. Alderaan is not so different from Naboo in that respect. We have no military either, but if I were in your situation, I'm sure I would be doing the same thing that you are," Bail replied. Padme smiled.

"Thank you Bail," Padme said, as she rose and exited his office.

Padme arrived home that afternoon and the twins ran to greet her. She hugged her angels tightly and sat down with them on the sofa.

"How was school today?" Padme asked. The twins proceeded to tell her all about their day.

A while later, Luke and Leia were playing with Jeena, while Padme visited with Lea, Shmi, Jobal, Beru, and Sola. Cliegg, Owen, and Ruwee decided to return to Naboo this morning and the women were staying an extra week to spend time with the children. It had long been Jobal's hope that Anakin and Padme would leave Coruscant and return to Naboo for good. But she understood how important they both were to the Republic and how much they were truly helping people.

The two crimson sabers clashed furiously in the dark, barely lit room. Darth Malina twirled her blade rapidly, before bringing it down on her opponent, who was still shrouded in the shadows.

"You're shadowboxing Darth Raze. If you can't keep up with me, then you are not ready to face the Chosen One," Malina taunted, her

lekku twitching in morbid amusement. A skinny, black haired young man came into the light, as he slashed his saber furiously. His skin was extremely pasty and his eyes bled Sithly yellow. He looked almost sickly, yet he fought fiercely and with an agile speed.

"I am ready!" he screamed.

"When I'm able to touch the Chosen One, I'll drain the life and light right out of him!" Raze stated. It was true. Akin to his name, Raze, which was another word for ruin, literally ruined and razed life that he touched. Born a normal, human boy on a peaceful, unknown world outside the Republic, he was not always cursed with his deadly ability. On his home world, mining was the main occupation of most males. One day, a horrible thing happened. The ground underneath him gave out and caved in. He fell into a pool of harmful, poisonous chemical that was underneath the surface. Miraculously, he survived that which should have killed him, though he was deathly ill for many months. It was when he began to get better, that his permanent, crippling side effect was discovered. At his touch, life drained slowly from whatever living thing had came in contact with his skin due to some adverse effect the poisonous chemical had on his body. For that reason, he began to wear leather gloves. However, the word of his condition quickly spread through his village. People avoided him and shunned him, causing anger and resentment to swell in him. Finally, after engaging in a fight with a bully who was constantly teasing him, and nearly killing the boy, the people exiled him to the world of Korriban, for it was well known that nothing was alive on Korriban for him to possibly kill. It was on one of Dooku's trips to the ancient Sith temples on Korriban that he discovered the young man. Dooku knew that the boy's abilities and obvious anger could be harnessed and used to his advantage. While Darth Raze was physically the weakest of his five apprentices, his abilities made him, in some ways, the most deadly. Malina extinguished her saber, as did Raze when Dooku entered the training area. They both knelt before him.

"Rise, my young apprentices," Dooku ordered.

"You have improved immensely, Darth Raze. But the Chosen One is extremely powerful. Your training will continued later, but for now you are dismissed," Dooku said.

"Yes my master," Raze bowed and exited, leaving Dooku with his top apprentice.

"He is weak master. The Chosen One will cut him down, before he even has a chance to touch him," Malina spat with disgust.

"Patience Malina, that is why you will double his already rigorous training schedule for the next few weeks," Dooku said.

"Has the time finally come to strike, master?" she asked.

"We shall make our presence known. According to our inside informant, in a few short weeks, Senator Amidala will be returning to Naboo for a parliament session to discuss the construction of a Naboo military to combat any future threats from Cato-Neimodia. Her husband will most definitely accompany her," Dooku said.

"Excellent," Malina replied.

"You are not to engage him yet and are only to observe from the shadows. I do not want it revealed that I have more than one apprentice...yet. Darth Raze is, for all intents and purposes, expendable. If he survives, all the better. If not, it will be of no consequence and only prove that he is too weak to be a Sith, despite his unique and deadly ability. Continue training and await my orders. You will leave for Naboo and on my signal," Dooku ordered.

"Yes, my master," Malina bowed.

Anakin's speeder landed on the veranda in the late afternoon and as they usually did, Luke and Leia rushed out to greet their father. Anakin held his arms out, as they came running and hoisted them up in his arms. He kissed them both soundly on the cheek and carried

them inside. They squirmed and chatted to him energetically, as they usually did and he chuckled. Padme smiled at him and greeted him with a kiss. Luke and Leia squirmed impatiently, as their father kissed their mother. He let them down, allowing them to run off to play, before wrapping his arms around his wife and kissing her deeply.

"Wow, what was that for?" she asked, as they pulled apart.

"Because I love you. And I sensed that you needed that," Anakin replied, with a smile. She wrapped her arms around his neck and pressed herself against him, allowing him to lift her off the floor. She pressed her forehead to his and smiled.

"You sensed right," she replied, her beautiful brown eyes sparkling.

"Tell me the truth. How was your day?" he asked. She sighed.

"It was okay. Bail approved my request for military presence in Theed," Padme replied.

"You did the right thing," he told her.

"I know. It's just so hard to accept for me," she replied. He smiled and set her down, before pressing a kiss to her forehead.

"I know angel. I wish it wasn't necessary, but you are doing the right thing and the only thing you can to protect your people," Anakin replied.

"Our people Ani, you're a Nabooan too," she replied, with a smile. He smiled back.

"I guess I am. I've always been at home there, after all," he replied. They walked to the bedroom, where Anakin shed his cloak and leather jerkin. He unbuttoned the top couple buttons on his dark brown tunic to get more comfortable and unhooked his utility belt. He placed his light saber on the night stand and felt Padme's arms wrap

around his waist. Anakin turned in her embrace and gave her a half smile, gazing at her fondly.

"I love you," Padme whispered, as she snaked her arms around his neck.

"I love you too," he replied, as he kissed her. Their lips met in an array of short, yet passionate kisses. He moved his lips sensually over hers and erotically probed his tongue inside her mouth. Padme moaned softly, as his tongue dueled with her own. She felt her knees go weak, as he plundered her mouth. Their passionate moment was interrupted by their rambunctious twins.

"Mommy, I'm hungry," Luke said, though it kind of came out as a whine.

"You're always hungry," Leia said, as she rolled her eyes.

"Am not,"

"Are too,"

"Am not,"

"Are too,"

"Am not,"

"Are too,"

"All right, that's enough you two. Dinner will be ready soon. Grandma Jobal and grandma Shmi have it in the oven," Padme replied.

"Daddy, come see what I made in school!" Leia blurted.

"All right princess, I'll be right there," Anakin told her, as she and her brother scampered off. He wrapped his arms around Padme's waist and kissed her softly.

"I guess we'll have to continue this later, milady," he said.

"I concur, handsome Knight," she replied, with a quick kiss. Anakin released her and then playfully scooped the twins up, causing them to squeal.

"All right womp rats, I want to hear all about your day," Anakin said, as he tossed them on the sofa and sat between them. They climbed on their father, each avidly telling him every single detail. She smiled, as her husband tickled them and then they tickled back. Luke and Leia knew very well that their father was also ticklish. She felt her heart melt, as she watched the three most important people in her life spend time together. It wasn't long before Anakin was waving her over. She eagerly took her place beside her husband, content that right now, they were the center of their children's universe, as they both knew it would not always be that way. But for now, they were and both Anakin and Padme intended to enjoy every moment of it...

Brewing Trouble

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars.

AN: Here's chapter 4! Thanks for all the great reviews! Enjoy!

Never Gone II

Chapter 4: Brewing Trouble

The bright rays of Coruscant's artificial sunlight streamed through the blinds, catching Anakin's eye. He rolled over and found Padme's side empty. He knew she had let him sleep in, since he only had his piloting class to teach that afternoon. Just as he was about to get up, Padme came into their bedroom and plopped down on the bed with him.

"Morning sweetheart," she said, as she kissed him tenderly.

"Good morning angel," he replied, with a smile. He noticed something odd, as it was very quiet in their apartment.

"Where are the twins? I thought they didn't have school today?" he asked. She smiled slyly at him.

"They don't. Our wonderful mothers have taken them to the zoo and the museum," she replied. Anakin smiled slyly. It was a rare occasion when they had a morning that wasn't hectic or busy.

"And if I recall, you don't have classes until this afternoon," she replied.

"You would be correct milady. What will we do with all this time?" he asked playfully.

"Oh, I can think of a few things," she replied, as her lips descended on his.

Later that afternoon, Sola brought Luke and Leia to Padme's office.

"Mommy, look at what we got!" Luke said, as he held up his blue stuffed Shaak.

"I got one too mommy," she said, as she held up one like Luke's, only in purple.

"We saw them at the Naboo exhibit. Did daddy really try to ride one?" Leia asked.

Padme looked at Sola, figuring she had been telling the twins stories again.

"He did sweetheart. But try is the operative word," Padme giggled.

"We're going to do a little shopping, but these two aren't very interested in coming," Sola said.

"That's fine, I'm pretty much done here. And I think Anakin will be soon too," Padme replied.

"Mommy, I want to go see daddy," Leia said.

"We will in just a little while sweetie," Padme told her.

"Thanks for taking them Sola," Padme said.

"Of course, little sister. We had a lot of fun. I'll see you tonight," Sola said. Just as Padme was packing up for the day, there was a knock at her office door.

"Come in," she called. The door slid open and Palo stepped in.

"Hello Senator," he greeted with a bow.

"Hello Palo," Padme greeted.

"The Chancellor is requesting to see you. Allow me to escort you to his office," Palo said. Padme nodded and stood up. There was another knock at the door and Aayla Secura stepped in.

"Hello Aayla," Padme greeted with a smile.

"Hello Padme. Is Anakin still with his class?" she asked.

"I believe so. I have to go speak to the Chancellor. When you see him, tell him I shouldn't be long," Padme replied.

"Mommy, can we go with master Aayla to see daddy?" Leia asked. Padme glanced up at Aayla and the Twi'lek smiled.

"Sure you can. Come with me," she said, as she led the twins out.

"You have beautiful children Padme. You must be very proud," Palo said.

"Thank you Palo. Both Anakin and I are very proud of them," Padme replied.

"Well, your husband is a very lucky man," Palo said.

"Thank you Palo, that is very nice of you to say," she replied, as they approached the Chancellor's office.

As Luke and Leia trailed behind Aayla, Leia spoke to her brother.

"Lukie, I don't like that man. He gives me a funny feeling," Leia said.

"Me too. And he stares at mommy a lot," Luke replied. Together, the twins decided that they would keep an eye on this Palo person. As they arrived, Anakin was observing his students at their simulators.

"Daddy!" Leia called. Anakin smiled and knelt down, as his twins ran to him.

"Hey, what are you guys doing here?" he asked, as he hugged them.

"Aunt Sola dropped us off with mommy. But she had to go see the Chancellor," Leia answered.

"Can I fly the simulator, dad?" Luke asked. Anakin smiled and ruffled his little boy's hair. Already at five, Luke was a chip of the old block.

"Sure can, little man," Anakin said, as he hoisted him up and placed him at a vacant simulator, which happened to be next to Han. Luke smiled and Han, but was given a scowl in return. Han glanced at Luke a few times to see how he was doing and was floored when he saw the five-year-old doing as well, if not better, than most of the older kids. But he didn't let his surprise show.

"Hey kid, I bet ya' can't beat me in a battle," Han challenged.

"We're supposed to stay on course," Luke replied.

"You scared kid?" Han taunted.

"Lukie isn't scared! He could out fly you with his eyes closed!" Leia replied.

"Be quiet Leia," Luke said.

"You in kid?" Han asked.

"Yeah I'm in," Luke replied, as he swerved into battle mode. Han smirked, as Luke flew into his target zone. But just as he was about to fire, Luke swerved and he missed. Han began to get frustrated, as it seemed that Luke was anticipating his every move. Luke moved in on the offense and Han tried to avoid him. But Luke locked him in his target zone and fired. Han's simulator began flashing red in critical and his screen went blank, as he was destroyed on the simulator. He had just lost to a five-year-old and he was furious.

"You little cheat! You used those freakish powers to beat me!" Han yelled, as he got in the little boy's face.

"Your just a sore loser, you nerfherder! Lukie beat you fair and square!" Leia yelled.

"Stay out of this *princess* ," Han yelled.

"Is there a problem, Mr. Solo?" Anakin asked, as he approached them.

"Yeah, yur kid cheated! He used those powers on me!" Han yelled. Anakin looked at Luke.

"I didn't dad, I promise! I was just flying like you taught me. I quieted my mind and let the Force guide me, just like you taught me," Luke pleaded. Anakin smiled and ruffled his son's hair.

"I know you did Luke," Anakin told him.

"Of course, yur taking his side!" Han yelled. Anakin turned to Han and led him aside.

"Luke did not cheat Han, he is just doing as I have always instructed him. You should not have even been in battle mode and you were supposed to stay on your flight path," Anakin said.

"So whatcha gonna do?" Han asked.

"Nothing Han. Just get back on your path and finish your course for the day," Anakin replied.

"You ain't gonna punish me?" Han asked, suspiciously.

"No Han, you didn't really do anything wrong. You just got a little off task. Believe me, my two precocious twins are very good at getting off task," Anakin replied, with a half smile.

"I don't get you," Han said.

"What don't you get?" Anakin asked.

"I messed up. And when my dad finds out that I lost to a five-year-old, I'll be in for it," Han replied.

"What do mean?" Anakin asked.

"Ya know, in for it. Don't you have a belt or somethin' for when yur kids get into trouble?" Han asked. Anakin looked at him strangely.

"No Han, Padme and I don't spank the twins. Hitting them wouldn't teach them anything. Finish your course and we'll keep your little loss as our secret," Anakin said, as he patted him on the back. Han nodded, a little humbled by Anakin at the moment.

"Yes sir," he said. His students were finishing up when Padme walked in.

"Hi angel," he greeted her, as she kissed him softly.

"Hi sweetie," she replied. Aayla was saying goodbye to the twins and approached Anakin.

"I'll see you in the morning meeting, Anakin," Aayla said.

"All right, see you then," Anakin replied.

"Goodbye Padme," Aayla said.

"Goodbye Aayla," Padme replied. As Aayla left, General Solo waltzed in and called his boys in training to attention. The General began barking orders at the boys, telling him that he would be gone for several days.

"That's the General," Anakin mumbled to Padme.

"I can see why his son is a bully," Padme mumbled back.

"Mommy, can we go home now?" Leia asked.

"We are in just a few moments sweetheart," Padme promised.

"Skywalker!" the general called gruffly, as he approached him. Seeing Padme, the general bowed.

"Milady," he greeted. Padme nodded in acknowledgment.

"How are my boys doing?" the general asked.

"They're all doing fine general. They're very fast learners," Anakin replied.

"Good. You tell me if any of them give you trouble. I'll see that they're disciplined," the general said.

"That won't be necessary, general," Anakin replied.

"I have special business to attend to on Corellia, so I'll expect a good report boys," the general said, as he marched out.

"I feel so bad for Han. I don't think he's really a bad kid, Anakin, " Padme said.

"He's not angel, he just hasn't had a very good example to follow. He even asked me if we hit the twins when we discipline them. I have a bad feeling that Han sees a lot of the general's harsh discipline," Anakin replied.

"He's going to be all alone. I'm going to invite him to dinner," Padme said. Anakin smiled and kissed her forehead. As Padme went to speak with Han, Anakin knelt down to the twins.

"Okay you two. Han's going to come to dinner tonight. I know he's teased you in the past, but can you both be nice to him?" Anakin asked.

"Sure daddy," Luke answered. Leia wrinkled her nose and pouted her lip out.

"Princess?" Anakin asked. Leia retracted her lip.

"Okay daddy," she replied.

Padme approached Han and he bowed to her out of respect.

"Han, since your father will be gone, why don't you come over for dinner?" Padme asked.

"Oh no maim, I wouldn't want to be any trouble," Han replied, nervous and unsure how to act around Padme.

"It's no trouble at all. Anakin and I would love to have you," Padme insisted.

"If your insist," Han replied, not wanting to be rude. His father may have hated politicians, but if he had ever found out that Han was rude to one of Coruscant's elite, he would be in a lot of trouble.

The Skywalker's arrived home with Han in tow. When they arrived, everyone was bustling about, as Shmi and Jobal were finishing dinner.

"Han, you can sit between Luke and Anakin," Padme said.

"Thank you maim," Han replied politely.

"Please Han, call me Padme," she said. Lea placed Jeena in her high chair, as Obi-Wan was already cutting up her meat into very small pieces. Padme introduced everyone to Han, as they all sat down to eat together.

"Did everything go okay with the Chancellor, angel?" Anakin asked.

"It went fine. He just wanted to inform me that troops have been stationed in Theed. I talked to Queen Apilana too today and she said parliament will be meeting in two weeks to discuss the construction of a military," Padme said.

"Oh, those awful Neimodians," Jobal said.

"Does this mean we're going home to Naboo for a while mommy?" Leia asked.

"Yes it does Leia. You and your brother are going to stay with your grandmas and grandpas," Padme replied.

"Where are you daddy going to be?" she asked.

"Mommy and I have to stay in the palace for a few days," Anakin replied.

"How come we can't stay in the palace this time?" Luke asked.

"It's not very safe in Theed right now little man. Your mom and I will feel a lot better if you're not in the middle of it. Besides, you'll be having fun at the Lake Retreat," Anakin replied.

"Your dad's right. We'll be having lots of fun swimming in the lake," Sola said.

"I don't much like any of you being in Theed right now either," Jobal mentioned, glancing at Anakin, Padme, Obi-Wan, and Lea.

"Mother, we'll be fine. Anakin and Obi-Wan would never let anything happen to either of us. You know that," Padme replied.

"I know Padme. I just hope that someday, all of you will leave this life behind and settle down to a quite life on Naboo," Jobal urged.

"Someday we will mother. But there is still much to do and many that need us," Padme replied. Everyone slowly finished their dinner and Luke was quick to speak to Han.

"Hey Han, wanna come see my room?" Luke asked.

"Sure kid," Han answered. As Han entered Luke's room, he ran straight into Threepio.

"Hey, watch it Goldenrod," Han said.

"Oh, I'm terribly sorry sir. I am C-3PO, human-cyborg relations. And you are?" Threepio asked.

"Han Solo," he replied, with an eye roll.

"He's our protocol droid. Dad built him," Luke said. Han watched with some amusement, as a little astro droid followed the golden one, clicking and beeping something to Threepio.

"Oh shut up, you bucket of bolts," Threepio responded.

"And *that's* Artoo. He has a little bit of an attitude problem, as uncle Obi-Wan would say," Luke said, as he began showing Han around his room.

Later, Han was getting ready to leave as the hour grew late. Padme had offered him a room for the night, but he politely declined.

"It was nice to have you over Han. You'll have to come again soon," Padme said.

"Thank you maim," Han replied.

"Yeah, you'll have to come over and play again!" Luke said, with excitement.

"Sure kid," Han replied.

"Yeah, I guess you're not so bad nerfherder," Leia said.

"Leia!" Padme scolded.

"Sorry Han," she replied. As Han hopped into the speeder Anakin was letting him borrow, he glanced back at the Skywalker family. They weren't anything like his father had said they were. He watched, enviously, as Anakin tickled his children, laughing and playing with them. His dad never did anything like that with him. His father didn't allow himself to show any kind of love toward Han at all.

Those were Han's thoughts, as he sped off into Coruscant's traffic toward home.

Next chapter...The Skywalker family returns to Naboo...

Foreboding Feelings

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars. It's as simple as that.

AN: Here's chapter 5! Thanks for all the great reviews!

Never Gone II

Chapter 5: Foreboding Feelings

Two weeks had passed quickly and the Skywalker family was preparing to leave that morning for Naboo. A few of the generals had asked him if he would consider picking his top two students and allow them to fly as escorts for the experience. Anakin had agreed, believing that he had two exceptional boys with a lot of potential. One was Han and the other was a seventeen year old boy by the name of Lando Calrissian from Bespin. He and Han had become friends during his class. The Chancellor had requested that Palo travel with them, as the Chancellor's eyes and ears. Having Palo along did not sit well with either Anakin or Padme, though they didn't really know why. And the twins were acting strange too this morning. Luke was sitting quietly, which was strange in itself. Usually his little man was running around, full of playfulness and energy. And currently, he was holding Leia, who was clinging to him like static. She hadn't let him put her down all morning and he could sense the distress and apprehension coming off his wife in waves.

"Leia, I need to go talk to mommy for a minute. Can you go sit with your brother?" Anakin asked. His little princess frowned and pouted her lip out at him.

"Uh uh," Leia reused.

"Princess, what's wrong?"Anakin asked his baby girl.

"I don't know, I just have a bad feeling daddy. And I don't know why," she told him.

"Everything's going to be okay sweetheart. You know I'd never let anything happen to you or Luke or mommy," Anakin replied.

"But what if something happens to you, daddy?" Leia asked, a whimper in her voice.

"Nothing will happen to me either," Anakin said, as he kissed her forehead and sat her down next to Luke. Clearly sensing his twin sister's distress, Luke offered his hand to her and she held it. Anakin smiled at his twins and headed for the bedroom where Padme was packing.

Dorme was packing some of Padme's gowns, while his wife stressed over something she was reading on her datapad. Anakin sighed and placed his hands on her shoulders.

"Oh Ani, the military presence in Theed hasn't deterred the Neimodians at all," Padme said. Anakin's blood boiled, as he thought of the recent threats from Aron Gunray, saying that his first order of business upon his invasion of Theed if they did not sign his treaty, would be Padme's public execution.

" *Like I'd ever let him get to her,"* Anakin thought. Nevertheless, security was at maximum. In addition to four escorts for their ship, Captain Typho and five of his best men were accompanying them, as well as two Knights. They were Shaak Ti and Whie Malreaux.

"Things will be all right, you'll see. The Neimodians are cowards and they'd be stupid to invade with all the troops stationed in Theed. And if your proposal passes, then there will be even more to discourage them. You know I'd never let anything happen to you," Anakin comforted her.

"I know, I always feel so safe in your arms," she said, as he held her tightly against his chest.

"Then you'll have nothing to worry about, because I'm not leaving your side. Anakin replied, as he leaned down and pressed a soft kiss

to her lips.

Later, the Skywalker family, Kenobi family, Padme's security, the two Knights, and the Chancellor's aid boarded the Sapphire Angel. Anakin took them out of the atmosphere and the four escorts followed, two in front and two in back. They made the jump to hyperspace and began the five hour journey to Naboo.

Upon their arrival on Naboo, the Skywalker and Kenobi families ventured to Varykino on the ferry. They brought Han and Lando along, as well as Captain Typho, while the rest of their entourage remained in Theed. Their families were there to greet them and they enjoyed a big family dinner together. After that, it came time to return to Theed, because the parliament session would begin early the next morning. Anakin and Padme hugged the twins tightly.

"I don't want you to go," Leia said, as she clung to her father.

"I know princess, we don't want to go either. But you'd be bored in the palace all day if you came with us. We'll only be gone a few days and you'll have a lot of fun here at the lake, ok?" Anakin replied. Leia nodded and Anakin kissed her forehead. Anakin and Padme held them both tightly for a few more minutes, before their grandmothers took them by the hand and had them stand back. Neither of them imagined it would be this hard to leave them, even if it was only for a few days. They hadn't been away from them longer than a day since they had been born.

"Mommy and daddy love you both so much," Padme said, as she kissed them both on the cheek. Anakin kissed them too and then led Padme onto the ferry.

It was equally hard for Obi-Wan and Lea to say goodbye to Jeena. As Obi-Wan held her, he remembered back to the night they welcomed her into the world. He had been in absolute awe of her, as Bant placed her in his arms. Having a child of his own was

something that just wasn't an option for a Jedi. He truly realized then that no one should be denied such a blessing, as bringing a child into the world. Nor, should they be denied the pleasure of raising that baby if they so wished. He had of course supported Anakin and Padme fully on their fight against the Jedi Council and their policy on taking newborns and the law that supported it. But the moment he held Jeena in his arms, was the moment he truly joined the fight against them. Just the thought of losing the precious child in his arms was too much to bear and he immediately regretted ever supporting such ideals. He had a family now and no one would take them away. And he would work to see to it that no one could break any other family up against their will. Reluctantly, Obi-Wan handed his little girl to Sola and took Lea's arm, leading her to the ferry.

"Love, are you all right?" Obi-Wan asked, as he spied a few tears falling down her cheeks.

"I'll be fine. I'm just having a tough time leaving her," Lea said.

"Me too, my love," he replied, as he kissed her softly.

Later that evening, Anakin entered Padme's suite in the palace. He immediately went for the fresher, having just sparred Obi-Wan in the palace gym for the last two hours. After a hot shower, he dried off and dressed in his sleep pants. He entered their bedroom and found his beautiful wife exactly where he knew she would be. By the expansive, panoramic window was a padded space, adorned with cushions and pillows, almost like a day bed. Padme loved to curl up there and read. She had a place like this in their bedroom at Varykino, which is why she had chosen this particular room to be theirs when they were staying at the palace. Often, whether they were at Varykino or here, they would curl up there together and cuddle. And many a nights, they had made love there, under the glow of the Nabooan moons, shining in on them. She was asleep there in her nightgown with a data pad resting in her lap, as usual. He knelt down beside her and pried the datapad from her hands. He carefully brushed some of her curls away from her face. He sat there

and watched her sleep for several minutes, thinking about how much he loved her and how much he hated it when she overworked herself to the point of exhaustion. He thought back to the last time they were here, nearly a year ago. She was making another important speech to parliament and working herself to death in the process. He had been glad to quickly make her forget about everything but the two of them...

Flashback

He came into their bedroom in his sleep pants, having just showered. When they were in the palace, he and Obi-Wan usually took the opportunity to use the state of the art gym the palace had to spar in. Padme was propped up against a cushion by her window, reading over her speech furiously. He knelt down beside her and kissed her cheek.

" *Hi sweetheart," she said, as she kept reading.*

" *It's fine Padme. The other eight people that have read it over think so too," Anakin told her.*

" *I don't know. I think my opening paragraphs need to be stronger," Padme rambled on.*

" *No, they're fine. What you really need to do is relax, so you can get a good night's sleep," he replied.*

" *No, I really need to work on my speech," she replied. He snatched it from her hand and placed it on the table. She made a grab for it, but he held her arms.*

" *Ani...I..." But she was silenced, as he claimed her lips in a passionate kiss. She struggled to get her words out, as his lips trailed kisses down her neck, leaving her skin tingling in their wake. He pinned her beneath him, as he kissed her all over.*

" *Ani...I have to finish...ooohhh..." her words were cut off by a moan, as she felt his hands slide slowly and sensually up her shapely legs, inching her nightgown up until it was bunched up around her waist...*

Much later, after their passionate bout, Anakin and Padme collapsed together, sated.

" *That was amazing Ani, as usual. Whatever would I without you?" she asked, her work and worries forgotten. He chuckled.*

" *You'd probably work yourself to death and have a very boring life," he replied. She giggled, before tickling his sides. He laughed and jumped up, pulling her with him.*

" *Now milady, we're going to bed where you are going to get some much needed sleep," he told her.*

" *Yes my master," she teased, as she pinched his rear. He smirked devilishly. He got her back by hefting her over his shoulder. She shrieked, as he carried her to bed...*

End Flashback

He smiled fondly at the memory, as he carefully lifted his sleeping wife into his arms. She whimpered and opened her bleary, sleep filled eyes.

"Ani...I need to work..." she mumbled.

"No angel, you need to rest. Go back to sleep," he told her. She obeyed, feeling perfectly safe and secure in his strong arms. He gently placed her in bed and slid in next to her. He brought the covers up over them and spooned her against him. She whimpered and turned in his arms to face him, snuggling against his chest. He smiled and kissed her hair, before closing his eyes and drifting to sleep with his beautiful wife in his arms.

The next morning, Padme, clad in an elaborate Senatorial gown, was led to the parliament rotunda on the arm of her husband. Parliament was called to session and Padme took her place at the podium to make her speech.

"Good morning. It is with a heavy heart that I come to you today. For centuries, we have lived peacefully and have upheld the pacifist views of our ancestors. Without those founding ideals, we would not be who we are today. It has been centuries since Naboo has housed a military of any kind and it was my hope that there would never be a need for one. However, there are those that wish to invade our beautiful, prosperous planet. They wish to destroy our air with their factories, pillage our natural resources and abuse our people. Almost seventeen years ago, these same beings caught us by surprise when they invaded and many lives were tragically lost. Today, they threaten us again and we must take measures to protect our people from another invasion. That is why I implore you to vote in favor of the creation of a Nabooan military to protect our planet from outside attacks and preserve our way of life. To do so, the defense must start here at home. Thank you," Padme concluded her speech. There was applause, as Padme stepped back from the podium. Anakin smiled to her reassuringly, as he stood off to the side. She returned his smile, as she took her seat, next to the Queen. The Chairman stood to address the body.

"Senator Amidala-Skywalker, many of your critics say that if you were simply to resign your post, the threat from the Neimodians would lessen. How do you respond to them?" the Chairman asked.

"The grudge that the Neimodians have runs deeper than against just me and my family. Whether or not I am in office will not change their desires to invade and destroy us. To prevent any loss of innocent life, we have to take the necessary steps to defend ourselves," Padme responded. The debating continued, but surprisingly by the afternoon, the bill was moved to the floor for vote. No one could really argue much, since something had to be done to protect the planet from Cato-Neimodia and other hostile planets.

"Votes will be compiled and results will be announced at tomorrow morning's session," the Chairman spoke, effectively dismissing the session for the day. Commotion filled the chamber, as the constituents milled around. As the doors swung open, Anakin and Obi-Wan felt something eerily elusive, but deeply rooted in the dark side through the Force. Anakin grasped Padme's arm, before she could walk out. Suddenly, a circular probe rolled into the room and smoke spilled from the small object, effectively creating a smoke screen. People began coughing and covering their mouths. Anakin pulled Padme to his chest and she buried her face, while he covered his mouth with his cloak.

"Captain, get the vents opened!" Anakin called to Typho. He nodded and motioned for his men to follow him out of the smoky room.

"Something's not right," Anakin said muffled through his cloak to Obi-Wan.

"I feel it too," Obi-Wan replied. Suddenly, Anakin pushed Padme behind him, as he ignited his sapphire saber. His saber met the blade of a crimson one, the figure holding it still shrouded in smoke. The vents began to suck the smoke out and the air slowly began to clear.

"I'll get everyone out," Obi-Wan said, already leading the Queen and Lea.

"Go with him Padme," Anakin said, his eyes never leaving the form that was becoming clear through the smoke.

"Be careful," she said, as she followed Obi-Wan. The image of the Sith that met him wasn't what he had been expecting. He knew that it hadn't been Dooku, for he would have sensed that. But this obvious new Sith apprentice didn't look like much. If Anakin didn't know any better, he would say that he looked very ill. But Anakin knew that it was wrong to underestimate any opponent. After all, a harmless old man had turned out to be the powerful Sith Lord that had orchestrated a war and left the Republic in shambles.

"So, finally we meet at last, Chosen One," the pale man spoke.

"You seem to know me, but I don't know you," Anakin replied.

"You may call me Darth Raze," he replied simply.

"So, you're Dooku's apprentice I presume," Anakin replied. The Sith smiled evilly.

"You don't know the half of it, Skywalker," he replied, as he swung his saber and brought it down on Anakin. Their sabers hissed and crackled, as they clashed furiously. After several minutes of sparring, Anakin was trying to figure this new apprentice out. It was clear that Anakin was far more skilled than the Sith, but Anakin knew that there had to be a reason Dooku had taken him as an apprentice. Their sabers clashed in a deadlock and the Sith's bleeding yellow eyes stared out at him. Anakin couldn't figure him out. The Sith had been shadowboxing him and clearly unable to match him, yet he seemed completely confident. And then, suddenly Anakin knew exactly why this man had been chosen by Dooku. In a lightning fast move, the Sith removed the glove on his free hand and grabbed Anakin's wrist...

Luke and Leia played by the lake under the watch of their aunt Sola. For the last few minutes, Leia had fixated her stare in the direction which Theed was located. Luke was trying to keep occupied by playing in the sand, but was extremely quiet. Leia looked back at her brother.

"Lukie, something's wrong. I know you feel it too," Leia said.

"But , what do we do? Mommy and daddy are in Theed," Luke whined.

"Well, then we go to Theed!" Leia demanded, stomping her foot.

"How are we supposed to do that laser brain?" Luke rolled his eyes.

"We get on the Ferry. We can hide," Leia replied.

"Leia, we'd been in so much trouble!" Luke whined.

"I wanna see mommy and daddy now! Something's wrong Lukie, I know it is," Leia whimpered, her eyes tearing. Luke stood up and brushed himself off.

"I want to see them too. But how do we get past aunt Sola?" he asked. As if the Force answered them, Sola turned her back to mediate an argument between Ryoo and Pooja.

"Come on Lukie, let's go," Leia said. They joined hands and ran off toward the dock. The twins squeezed in among some other people, successfully slipping by Paddy Accu and quickly hid under a tarp. The ferry set sail for Theed just as Sola discovered that the twins were missing...

The Battle With Darth Raze

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars. It's George's sandbox.

AN: Here's chapter 6! Thanks for all the great reviews!

Never Gone II

Chapter 6: The Battle With Darth Raze

Anakin's breath came in ragged gasps now, as he felt the life energy literally leaving him. He looked into the Sith's bleeding yellow eyes, as the man smirked evilly at him.

"An interesting ability, wouldn't you say? Some call it a curse. Others, like my master, call it a gift. There's a poisonous chemical in my skin that makes my touch deadly to any living thing," Raze said. Anakin jerked his arm away, but was already too weak to pull away. He sunk to his knees and became deathly pale.

"You're finished, Chosen One," Darth Raze said, as he tugged the glove off his other hand and grabbed Anakin around the neck.

"Let him go," Obi-Wan said, as he entered the room. The Sith smirked and released Anakin, letting him fall to the floor. Obi-Wan carefully approached him and lifted his head.

"Obi-Wan?" he asked weakly.

"Stay still Anakin," Obi-Wan replied.

"Don't...let him...touch your skin. His skin...it's poisonous," Anakin rasped, as he tried to stand up.

"No, Anakin, stay still," Obi-Wan replied.

"My strength is starting to return...already. I'll be fine," Anakin said, while Obi-Wan ignited his saber and prepared to fight the Sith.

Padme paced like a caged nexu. Obi-Wan had brought them to the underground safety bunker, where Captain Typho and his men were guarding outside.

"Padme, please, you need to calm down," Lea pleaded.

"I can't Lea. Something's wrong with Ani, I can feel it," she cried. Padme opened the door, only to be blocked by Captain Typho.

"Milady no, I cannot allow you to go," Typho protested.

"Please Captain, I have to. Something's wrong with Anakin!" Padme cried.

"I'm sorry milady, but I can't let you leave when there is a Sith Lord out there," Typho said firmly, blocking her escape.

Darth Malina sat in a deep mediation, monitoring Darth Raze's battle through the Force. She was aboard Viceroy Aron Gunray's ship in orbit of Naboo.

"I am tired of waiting. We need to launch our invasion now!" the Viceroy demanded.

"We will not be invading Naboo today, Viceroy," she replied, without opening her eyes.

"Why not!" he screamed.

"This battle is merely a test for the Chosen One and will serve to make our presence known. My master has ordered that I do not reveal myself yet," Malina replied, again without opening her eyes.

"I don't care what your master wants! We invade the planet and begin our take over, starting with the execution of a certain Senator!" he screamed. Malina's eyes snapped open and she was on her feet in seconds. She backhanded the sniveling Neimodian, causing him to slide across the slippery metal floor on his back. The Neimodian's black eyes were wide with terror, as she held her crimson saber at his throat.

"We will do things my way Viceroy or you will die. And I'll enjoy cutting you into pieces. You are a worthless, sniveling coward, but my master requires the services of your droid factories for his plans to work. However, you can easily be replaced by another worthless being of your race," Malina growled. The Viceroy held up his hands in surrender.

"No...please don't...kill me," he coward.

"Then shut that hole in your face and follow *my* orders!" she said angrily, before swiping her saber over him through the air, in a demonstration of just what she would do to him if he didn't obey her. She extinguished her saber and went back to her meditation...

Obi-Wan fought the Sith with hardly any trouble at all. He could see why this man would have to have the special ability to be of any use to Dooku at all. The Sith smirked.

"You think that my touch is the only thing that makes me a worthy Sith? You won't be thinking that when I become the one responsible for killing the almighty Chosen One," Raze said.

"You are fighting me and you will leave him alone. You've done enough already," Obi-Wan said, briefly glancing at Anakin, who was slowly regaining his strength.

"But I was sent to kill him...and I always complete my mission!" Raze screamed, as he fired Force lightning at Anakin. It was a strange green color that Obi-Wan had never seen and before Anakin could

move, he was hit full Force with the strange colored lightning. Anakin screamed in agony, as he felt the life energy leave him.

"Oh, did I forget to mention that because the lightning comes from my skin, it also has the poisonous effects that my touch does as well," Raze boasted. The Sith angrily poured lightning into Anakin, relishing in his agonizing screams. Obi-Wan growled and toppled the Sith, wrestling him to the ground. Raze growled and turned his lightning to Obi-Wan. Jumping up, Obi-Wan dodged it and then caught the next blast with his saber. He glanced at Anakin out of the corner of his eye. He was unconscious now and deathly pale.

"He's as good as dead," Raze taunted.

"Shut up!" Obi-Wan screamed, as their sabers clashed furiously.

Luke and Leia ran up the steps of the palace hand in hand. Suddenly, they both stopped, feeling an immense wave of pain pass through the Force. They looked at each other.

"Daddy!" they said, simultaneously, before they ran up the rest of the way and behind a pillar. When the guards weren't looking, they slipped into the palace and looked around, trying to sense the right direction. Luke pointed down the hall to the left.

"This way Leia," Luke said. She nodded, as they started in that direction, only to suddenly run into two pairs of legs. Luke and Leia looked up, only to see Han and Lando staring down at them.

"What the hell are you pipsqueaks doin' here?" he asked.

"How'd you two get here anyway?" Lando asked.

"We snuck aboard the ferry," Luke said, shamefully.

"Daddy is in trouble! We have to find him!" Leia cried.

"No way kids, you ain't goin' anywhere. It's too dangerous!" Han yelled.

"Move out of the way nerfherder!" Leia shouted, as she ran past him.

"Leia!" Luke called, as he ran after her.

"Ah damn it," Han said, throwing his arms up.

"Come on, we need to follow them," Lando said. Han nodded, as they ran after the troublesome twins.

Padme was pacing wildly. She knew something was terribly wrong and she couldn't take it anymore. She grabbed a blaster and shoved her way through Captain Typho's men outside the door.

"Milady, no!" Typho yelled.

"Something's wrong. I won't just stand here and do nothing," Padme said, as wrenched her arm away and ran down the hall. Typho sighed.

"We'll go after her. You and your men stay here and guard the Queen," Shaak Ti said, as she and Whie ran after Padme.

Luke and Leia ran into the palace rotunda. Atop some of the round pods, their uncle Obi-Wan fought a man with a red light saber.

"Daddy!" Leia cried, as she and Luke ran to his unconscious form.

"Wake up daddy," Leia whimpered. Han and Lando rushed in after them.

"Look you two, we gotta get you outta here. There's some psycho running around here with a red light saber," Han said. Luke pointed up, showing Han that the man was in the same room as they were.

"There he is. Uncle Obi-Wan is fighting him," Luke said. At that moment, Padme came running into the room.

"Luke and Leia! What are you two doing here?" she asked, as she knelt down beside Anakin.

"We felt that something was wrong in the Force, so we snuck away on the ferry," Luke said quietly.

"Daddy won't wake up," Leia whined.

"Maim, I don't think he's breathing," Lando said, worriedly. Padme backed everyone away and began pumping her husband's chest, before breathing into his mouth. Luke and Leia looked horrified, as Han and Lando held them back.

"Don't you dare leave me, Anakin Skywalker," she said fiercely, as she pumped his chest.

Anakin looked around at the bright white surroundings, seeing Qui-Gon standing before him.

" *Master Qui-Gon...am I dead?" he asked.*

" *No Anakin, you must go back. There is still much for you to do. You must use your powers to defeat the Sith again, just like you did Palpatine. Let go and let the Force fill you," Qui-Gon instructed.*

" *Yes master," Anakin replied.*

" *Anakin, you must be on your guard now that Dooku's apprentice has made an appearance. He may not be the last one," Qui-Gon warned.*

" *What do you mean?" Anakin asked.*

" *Always before, Master Yoda has always stressed the Sith rule of two. But my old master was never one for following rules," Qui-Gon*

said.

" *What do you mean, master?" Anakin asked.*

" *As a Jedi, he didn't follow the rules and as a Sith, he probably hasn't either," Qui-Gon replied.*

" *You mean, Darth Raze may not be the only apprentice. There could be more...many more," Anakin said, in realization.*

" *Yes Anakin, I'm afraid there could be more. You must go back. Your family needs you," Qui-Gon said, as he faded and everything went dark...*

Anakin suddenly coughed and his eyes opened.

"Ani, oh Ani, you scared me," Padme said, as she helped him sit up. He heaved air into his lungs, as looked around.

"What are the twins doing here?" he asked.

"They stowed away on the ferry. It seems we're going to be having a very long talk very soon," Padme said sternly to her five-year-olds, who lowered their heads. Anakin stood up slowly, as Padme held his arm.

"Anakin, you're too weak," Padme protested.

"I'll be fine. He's spotted us, so stay back," Anakin said, as he closed his eyes, drawing his strength from the Force.

Obi-Wan's saber clashed again with Darth Raze's and they crackled and sparked.

"Well, look down there. The whole Skywalker family in one place. This is almost too easy," Raze said, as he swept Obi-Wan's feet out from under him. Obi-Wan yelped, as his saber fell from his hand and he grabbed onto the edge of one of the pods. Darth Raze left him

and used the Force to float himself down to the floor level. Obi-Wan used the Force and pulled himself into the pod, just as Anakin began to glow with the power of the Force.

"What the hell is going on?" Han asked, looking at the whitish silver aura surrounding Anakin's body. Anakin opened his eyes and turned to them and Han gasped at Anakin's glowing eyes. Padme immediately recognized the way they looked, just like on the day he defeated Palpatine.

"Stay back and don't worry, everything will be fine," Anakin told them. The Sith approached and hurled his poisonous Force lightning at them.

"Die Chosen One!" he screamed. Luke, Leia, Han, and Lando screamed, as they saw the lightning coming at them. But when they felt no pain, they looked up and saw that the lightning could not penetrate the aura around Anakin. As the poisonous lightning was deflected back at him by the Chosen One, Darth Raze realized that he was about to be killed by his own poison. Padme knelt down and pulled the twins to her, burying their eyes in her neck so they could not witness the death.

"Close your eyes, my angels," she told them. They obeyed and clung to their mother, shuddering as the Sith let out a blood curdling scream. The screams soon ceased, as the Sith was killed. The glow around Anakin disappeared and he fell to his knees. Padme turned to Han and Lando.

"Boys, can you please take the twins and wait outside," Padme said, as she handed them over, making sure they didn't turn around.

"Yes maim," Han replied, as they led the children out. Padme knelt beside her husband, as he gained his bearings. She brushed his hair away from his face and kissed his cheek, while Obi-Wan inspected the mangled remains of the Sith apprentice. He was glad the twins had not seen this, as half the man's face was burnt away by the poisonous lightning. He found a cloth tarp and covered the

gruesome scene and then went to Anakin and Padme. He helped Anakin to his feet.

"I'm fine," Anakin insisted.

"Maybe, but you were hit by the poisonous lightning and should see a healer," Obi-Wan replied. Anakin nodded and allowed himself to be led to the palace med bay.

An hour later, the healer came out to the waiting family.

"Is he all right?" Padme asked, standing up immediately.

"He's fine milady. If there were any particles of the poison in his skin, the bacta tank took care of them all. We just took him out and he can be released immediately," the healer said.

"Thank you," Padme said, as she and the twins went in. Anakin was buckling his belt on his pants and drying off his torso with a towel. The twins ran to him and he scooped them up.

"You're okay daddy, me and Lukie were worried," Leia said.

"Yeah, I'm all right princess. But I think it's time we talk about why you two are here," Anakin said. The twins winced and lowered their heads.

"We sensed that something was wrong. We're sorry daddy, we shouldn't have come," Leia said sadly. Anakin sighed.

"I know why you both did, but do you know how dangerous it was to come here? If anything happened to either of you, mommy and I couldn't bare it," Anakin said.

"Not to mention that you're Aunt Sola and your grandparents were frantic when I called them. They didn't know what had happened to you. You can't just wander off like that," Padme chided.

"We're sorry mommy," Luke said sadly.

"It's okay Luke. I'm sure you've both learned your lesson. We can talk more about this later. Why don't you go outside and wait with uncle Obi-Wan and aunt Lea. Mommy and daddy will be out in just a minute," Padme said. Luke and Leia hopped down off the table and trotted out. Padme turned to her husband and slid her arms around his waist, before crushing her lips against his in a searing kiss. Anakin tangled his fingers in her hair, as he kissed her back with wanton. They eventually broke the passionate kiss and held each other tightly.

"Oh Gods Anakin, you scared me. You stopped breathing and I thought I was going to lose you," Padme cried. Anakin shushed her and kissed her again.

"I'm all right, I'm all right," he assured her.

"Why did the Sith have to return. Why can't they just leave us alone. Damn you Dooku," Padme swore. Anakin winced.

"That's why I need to talk to Obi-Wan soon, angel. I saw Master Qui-Gon when I was unconscious. He suggested that Darth Raze may not be the only Sith apprentice," Anakin said.

"What? But I thought there was always two," Padme asked.

"There usually is, but Dooku has never been one for rules. There could be more apprentices," Anakin replied. She shuddered against him and he held her silently for a few more minutes.

"I'll send Obi-Wan in and you can talk while I take the twins and get them ready for bed," Padme said. Anakin nodded.

"I'll be there soon," he replied, as he kissed her softly. She nodded and sent Obi-Wan in, as Anakin was buttoning his tunic.

"What is it Anakin?" Obi-Wan asked.

"I think that Darth Raze was just the beginning. I think Dooku might have more than one apprentice," Anakin said. Obi-Wan's eyes widened, before he listened intently to Anakin's explanation...

As she felt Darth Raze's Force signature cease to exist, her eyes snapped open.

"Prepare my shuttle. I must return to Korriban at once," Darth Malina snapped to her subordinates. The Chosen One had defeated Darth Raze, but he would not be so lucky in the future if she had anything to do with it...

Love is Light

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars. It's George's sandbox.

AN: Here's chapter 6! Thanks for all the great reviews!

Never Gone II

Chapter 7: Love is Light

Padme exited the fresher in her nightgown that evening. A precious, heart warming sight met her eyes. Her children were curled up asleep against their father on their large bed. Anakin gave her a half smile.

"I think they're afraid I'm going to disappear or something," he told her. Padme smiled, as she climbed into bed and snuggled against her husband. She rested her head in the nape of his neck and stroked Luke's hair as he slept soundly.

"They feel safe when you're near. I do too," she told him.

"I won't ever be anywhere else than with you and our children," he promised.

"They were worried about you. I was too," she replied.

"I'm fine angel and I'm not going anywhere," he replied.

"I love you Anakin."

"I love you too Padme."

She snuggled against him and slowly drifted to sleep. Sleep came to Anakin too, as he held his family close to him and drifted off into a dreamless sleep.

The next morning, parliament met to discuss the results of yesterday's vote.

"The votes have been compiled and Senator Amidala's bill to create a military has unanimously passed," the Chairman announced. Everyone congratulated Padme, before the session adjourned. Anakin escorted her out and placed a kiss on her cheek.

"Angel, are you okay?" Anakin asked, as she seemed distant.

"I'm fine Ani, I just hate that I had no other choice that creating a military," Padme replied.

"I know Padme, but you did the right thing," Anakin replied. She smiled and nodded.

"I know. Don't you and Obi-Wan have a meeting with the other Knights now?" she asked. He nodded.

"Yeah, I was just heading that way. I shouldn't be long and then we can spend the rest of the day together," he replied, as he leaned down and pressed his lips to hers.

"Senator, forgive me for interrupting, but Chancellor Organa has called and wants a report of the events that have transpired here. It seems the Holonet is rampant with rumors and the Chancellor wishes to end any speculation and set the record straight," Palo said.

"Very well," Padme nodded, as she gave her husband a long kiss, before they parted ways to attend to their duties.

The Holo images of Kit Fisto, Aayla Secura, Shaak Ti, and Nejaa Halcyon appeared.

"It's good to see that you're both safe," Shaak Ti said.

"Thank you," Obi-Wan replied.

"So, the Sith have emerged again," Nejaa concluded.

"Yes, Anakin killed what we believe to be the first of several apprentices that Dooku has trained," Obi-Wan replied.

"Several? What do you mean?" Aayla asked in alarm.

"The Sith I fought had a special ability. His touch and his Force lightning was poisonous. I was unconscious for a while after being hit with his lightning and Master Qui-Gon came to me. He said that it was very likely that Dooku had broken the rule of two. He may be training more," Anakin said.

"If this is true, then we all must be on our guard," Shaak Ti said. They all agreed.

"May the Force be with us all," Kit concluded the meeting and their holo images vanished.

"It's good to see you safe Padme," Bail said, as his holo image flickered to life.

"Thank you Bail," she replied, before continuing.

"Parliament has granted my petition to create and house a Nabooan military. The vote passed this morning," Padme informed him.

"I'm glad to hear it. Now, I understand there was quite an episode there yesterday," Bail replied. Padme took a deep breath.

"Yes, I'm afraid that Dooku has been busy. His apprentice infiltrated the palace yesterday. Anakin disposed of him, but we both believe that this is just the beginning of the trouble we will see," Padme replied.

"I agree with you Padme," Bail said, sighing deeply.

"What is it Bail?" Padme asked.

"Master Jill and Master Windu came to me this morning. They've heard that the Sith have re-emerged and now are protesting your bill that bans them from taking children from their parents...again. They are going to make a request to the Senate that they revoke your bill," Bail said.

"Surely they cannot succeed Bail. Anakin and the KGR can handle the Sith. They do not need to use this as an excuse to steal children!" Padme replied.

"I am sure their request will not get very far, especially with you and others that will protest it heavily," Bail replied. Padme nodded.

"Thank you for your support Bail," she replied.

"No thanks necessary Padme. Have a safe trip back to Coruscant when you return in a few days," Bail said.

"Thank you Bail," Padme replied, as his holo image faded. Padme sighed and turned to leave.

"I'm sure everything will work out Padme," Palo offered. Padme gave him a small smile.

"Thank you Palo," she replied, as she left to find Anakin. Once she left, Palo smirked.

"Don't worry Padme, everything will work out...for me. Your husband won't survive what we intend to throw at him. Then, when he meets his tragic end, I'll be there to comfort you," Palo said, an evil grin encompassing his face...

Padme spotted her husband in the halls near her office. He was obviously waiting for her and she felt the need for him to hold her tightly. Anakin smiled at her, as she approached him, but was

surprised when she threw her arms around him. He held her close and hugged her tightly.

"Are you okay, angel?" he asked. She smiled and looked up at him.

"I'm fine...I just need you to hold me right now," Padme replied.

"Well, I'm not going anywhere. Threepio is telling the twins a story, so I'm all yours. Something has upset you. Tell me," Anakin urged, seeing a troubled look on her beautiful face.

"Bail said that the Council is going to try and do it again. They're going to use the reappearance of the Sith to urge the Senate to re-instate the old law concerning children with high midichlorian counts," Padme said.

"I doubt they'll get very far angel. And we'll oppose them every step of the way. Nothing will take the twins from us," he promised.

"But they'll try, just for spite. And...oh Ani, they'll probably try to take Jeena from Obi-Wan and Lea," Padme fretted. Anakin pulled her to him tightly.

"Shh...Obi-Wan and I will not let them take our children. They would be foolish to try," Anakin assured her. Padme clung to him tightly, as they walked to their room.

As Anakin and Padme entered, Threepio greeted them.

"Hello Master Ani, Miss Padme," Threepio greeted.

"Hello Threepio, how are the twins?" she asked.

"Oh they're fine Miss Padme . I told them a story and now they are sleeping quite soundly. I put them to bed for you," Threepio replied.

"Thank you Threepio," Padme said, as she and Anakin went to look in on them. Anakin watched her fondly, as she pressed a kiss to

each of their heads and quietly tip toed out.

"I'm glad Threepio got them to take a nap. Now maybe they won't be so wound up tonight when we have dinner with queen," Padme said.

"Too bad we can't skip it," Anakin said, as he wrapped his arms around her from behind and kissed her neck.

"Sorry my love, but our attendance is required. So, we should make good use of our time," she replied, as she turned and wrapped her arms around his neck. He raised an eyebrow.

"What did you have in mind?" he asked playfully.

"I think you know," she replied sultrily. Her lips drew his kiss. Padme trembled in his strong arms, as he kissed her passionately. She tugged him toward their bedroom and he eagerly followed. Anakin momentarily broke the kiss to quietly shut the door and set the lock. It wasn't that they were worried about the twins barging in necessarily, because they knew they would be asleep for at least a couple hours. But Threepio had a bad habit of just walking in, as he tended to various household duties. Once the door was close, Anakin turned back to Padme and she assaulted his lips with her own furiously.

"I need you," she said, as she began to tug at his clothes. He kissed her deeply, as began working her out of her dress. Padme's hands worked him out his own clothes and they tumbled to the bed...

Darth Malina arrived at her master's fortress in the outer rim. She had stopped briefly on Korriban to retrieve a couple ancient Sith holocrons her master had requested that she get.

"Greetings my master," Malina bowed.

"Rise my young apprentice," Dooku acknowledged her.

"It would seem that Darth Raze was not meant to be one of us," Dooku said.

"No master, he failed. If I had intervened, I would have destroyed the Chosen One!" Malina stated fiercely.

"Patience, my young apprentice. Your time will come," Dooku assured her.

"What is thy bidding, my master?" she asked.

"I am leaving shortly to check the progress on the Death Star. It is several days' journey from here, even deeper into the unknown reaches of space. You will ready Darth Severus and Darth Mirima for their missions. Darth Severus will engage the Chosen One. He is a fierce warrior. I have plans for Darth Mirima. Her abilities will prove useful, "Dooku said.

"Darth Mirima's shape shifting abilities won't fool the Chosen One or Kenobi for long. Is it wise to reveal her so soon?" Malina questioned.

"I have other plans for her right now. I have detailed her mission and objective on this datachip," he replied, handing it to her.

"She knows exactly what I expect of her. I will be in touch to see how things are progressing, " Dooku said, as he left for the landing platform.

Darth Severus and Darth Mirima were sparring viciously, as Darth Malina entered the training room. Darth Severus, once known as Jerec, was of the Miraluka species. Human in appearance, for the most part, it was their eyes that set them apart. All Miraluka were physically blind, yet an exceptionally Force strong race of beings. They physically could not see, but they perceived the world around them through the Force. Jerec was once a Jedi and trained under Jocasta Nu. But because he shared many of the ideals that Count Dooku shared, he left the order, becoming a dark Jedi. Dooku

enlisted his help in his cause and began training him alongside Asaaj Ventress. During Nute Gunray's trial, Dooku came to them both with a mission. He needed the strongest of the two to carry out the murders of the twelve jurors in the trial and then the kidnaping of Senator Amidala-Skywalker. A furious battle erupted between them after Dooku had chosen him to carry out the mission. Ventress caught him off guard during the battle and severed his arm at the shoulder. Being the vicious and vindictive woman that she was, she severed his other arm at the shoulder as well.. She took the mission, while he was being fitted for prosthesis. His arms were replaced with metal ones, giving him a vicious, brute strength that he had not known before. The blood lust and rage swelled in him and whatever sliver of light that remained in him was severed that day, just like his arms. He pledged his loyalty to Dooku the day Palpatine was killed and sensing the complete separation from the light side, Dooku dubbed him Darth Severus. Severus was a tall, broad shouldered man with graying brown hair. His metal arms added to his already menacing appearance. A thin, headband like strip of cloth was fastened across his eyes. Many of the Miraluka species wore something like this over their eyes, for they had empty eye sockets. He brought his saber down mercilessly on the smaller female figure he was fighting. But she was holding her own and her appearance was designed to fool a person. She appeared to be a petite blonde woman, but in reality, she could appear to be anyone. She was a clawdite changeling with the ability to appear as anyone. She was skilled in the ways of the dark side and thirsted for blood. Her name was derived from the phrase "Mirror Image", since she was able to appear as anyone. They stopped sparring in Malina's presence and came to attention.

"Master has informed me that you are both aware of your objectives. I have reviewed them also and I have increased your training schedules. We will leave for Naboo in a few days. The two other Sith nodded and returned to their intense sparring...

Padme snuggled against him, as they bathed in the afterglow of their lovemaking.

"Wow," Anakin said, with a satisfied grin plastered on his face. Padme giggled, as she snugged against his bare chest.

"I'll say," she replied. Anakin slowly got out of bed and pulled her to him. She moaned into his kiss, as they pressed their bare bodies together.

"Come on," he said, as he pulled her toward the fresher.

"What are you up to?" she asked playfully.

"We're going to take a hot bath together," Anakin replied.

"Is that all we're going to do?" she asked teasingly. He pulled her close, as he started the water.

"No, I'll probably end up making love to you again," he replied.

"I hope so," she said, as she slipped into the tub. Anakin eased into the water behind her and she snuggled against him.

"I love you," Anakin said, as he kissed her cheek. She turned her head to face him.

"I love you too Ani, so much," she replied, as their lips met passionately...

The Sith Strike Again

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars.

AN: Here's chapter 8! Thanks for all the great reviews! Enjoy and let me know what you think!

Never Gone II

Chapter 8: The Sith Strike Again

A couple weeks had passed with relative peace. Because of this, the Skywalker and Kenobi families enjoyed a nice respite. It had been at least two years since they had been able to spend an entire two weeks in the lake country together and everyone had enjoyed it immensely. They had even invited Han and Lando along and the boys also enjoyed themselves. Now, they would be returning to Theed for the day. Padme had some business to attend to with the Queen and then they would return to Coruscant the following day, as the Senate was wet to resume sessions in a couple days.

Palo found a vacant office in the palace and pressed a button on the comm system. The holo images of Darth Severus and Darth Mirima.

"They have just arrived in Theed this morning. The Senator will be meeting with the Queen very soon," Palo reported.

"Very good. Darth Mirima and I will infiltrate the palace. Carry on as normal," Severus ordered. Palo nodded and bowed.

"No!" Leia yelled, as she clung to her father's leg.

"Come on princess. Mommy and daddy have to attend to some important meetings. You'll have fun at the museum with grandma and grandpa Naberrie and aunt Lea," Anakin pleaded with her.

"But we want you and mommy to come!" Leia complained. Anakin sighed and looked down at his son, who was clinging to his other leg. Luke looked up at him with a pout. He glanced over at Obi-Wan, seeing that he was having the same problem with Jeena. All of the kids had been especially clingy since the incident with the Sith two weeks ago.

"Mommy and daddy are going to meet up with you after lunch. Then, we'll spend the rest of the day together," Padme told them.

"Yeah and daddy will even buy you Shuura sodas," Anakin told them, watching their eyes light up at the mention of the sugary treat. Padme gave him a pointed look and Anakin smiled sheepishly. The twins reluctantly accepted that their parents would meet them later and left in the speeder with Lea and Jeena. Padme looped her arm in her husband's, while Obi-Wan followed behind them, as they walked back up the palace steps.

"Shuura sodas will keep them up to an ungodly hour, my love," Padme chided.

"I know, but they were never going to let go otherwise. Besides, they only get them once in a while," Anakin argued playfully.

"You're just a big kid yourself," she accused, with a sly smile.

"Guilty, but you love me anyway," he replied.

"Lucky you. I'll see you in a little while after my meeting," Padme said, as she kissed him softly, before heading to her office to gather her things for the meeting.

Yane and Eirtae, former handmaidens to Amidala and now handmaidens to Apilana began their morning duties as usual. They began helping the Queen with her makeup, headdress and finally her gown.

"Eirtae, can you please retrieve the datapads from my office? There are a few things I need to review before my meetings," Apilana requested, as Yane put the finishing touches on her face paint.

"Of course your majesty," Eirtae replied, as she headed for the Queen's office. Upon entering, she saw a blonde woman standing in the middle of the room.

"You can't be in here. This is the Queen's office. May I see your security pass?" Eirtae asked, thinking that she was perhaps a new handmaiden. The woman whipped around, revealing a startling pair of yellow eyes. Eirtae gasped, but before she could call for help, her airway became constricted. She gasped for air, but could not get any.

"Here's my security pass," the Sith sneered, as she ignited her crimson saber and plunged it into the handmaiden's heart, killing her instantly. The shape-shifting Sith changed herself to appear as the handmaiden she had just killed. She extinguished her saber and opened a nearby closet. She picked up the body and shoved it inside.

"Don't worry you won't be alone for long. I have lots of other bodies to add to my collection today," she said sadistically, before returning to the Queen's quarters under the guise of Eirtae.

Upon entering the Queen's quarters, Yane didn't even have a chance to see her killer, as she was choked and her windpipe was crushed. Under the guise of her trusted handmaiden, the Sith entered the Queen's bedroom and slew her with a single saber strike to the heart. The guise of Eirtae melted away and was replaced by the visage of Queen Apilana, who now lay dead at her feet. She quickly hid the bodies and left for the Queen's office for her "meeting" with Senator Amidala-Skywalker.

Padme entered the Queen's office and gave a light bow.

"Good morning your majesty," Padme greeted.

"Good morning Senator," the Queen replied.

"Please have a seat," the Queen offered.

"Thank you your majesty. What did you wish to discuss with me?" Padme asked. The Queen stared at her and Padme gasped, as Apilana's eyes turned Sithly yellow. Padme shot up out of her chair, only to be bludgeoned on the head with a hard object from behind. Padme lost consciousness before she could turn to see who her attacker was.

"Take her down to one of the rooms in the bowels of the palace like we discussed," the Sith told the attacker. Palo smirked and hefted Padme over his shoulder and left through the concealed passageway from which he had entered.

Suddenly, in the middle of their meeting, Anakin shot up out of his chair.

"Anakin, what is it?" Obi-Wan asked in alarm.

"Something's wrong with Padme. There's something dark, but very elusive," Anakin said. Obi-Wan closed his eyes and concentrated for a moment.

"It's very elusive, but it's there. They have gotten very good at concealing themselves," Obi-Wan said.

As Obi-Wan and Anakin followed their senses, they were led deep into the bowels of the palace. Soon, they came to a control room that was very familiar to Obi-Wan. A dark, eerie presence rested in the room.

"The dark side is strong in here," Anakin mentioned.

"That's because this is where Qui-Gon was killed and where I killed Maul," Obi-Wan replied.

"The Sith like the dark energy in here, so that's why they've chosen to fight us here," Obi-Wan said, as two figured appeared from the shadows.

"Who are you? And what have you done with my wife?" Anakin demanded.

"Don't lose your cool, Chosen One. She's fine for the time being. I'm Darth Mirima," she said, as she shifted her appearance. Anakin's eyes widen ed, as his own face stared back at him.

"My name is derived from the phrase mirror image," she said, as her image shifted again, this time to Queen Apilana.

"So you see, capturing your wife was child's play," she said, as her image shifted to Eirtae.

"Your ability is impressive. But can you do more than change your appearance or do you plan to talk me to death?" Anakin taunted. The Sith snarled and ignited her blade.

"I'll make you eat your words, Chosen One," she snarled, as she leapt toward him. Anakin, igniting his sapphire blade, met her attack head on...

Obi-Wan looked at the other Sith, trying to remember where he had seen him before.

"Yes, you should recognize me. Before I became Darth Severus, I was once known as Jarec," Severus said.

"I remember now. You were once trained by Jocasta Nu. Then you left the order around the same time as Dooku to follow him. I

suppose it should be no surprise that he made you into a full-fledged Sith Lord," Obi-Wan said.

"The Jedi were and still are fools. I think we can both agree on that," Severus said.

"But we do not agree on a great many other things. You and your master's ideals will lead this galaxy to destruction. The Jedi may not stand in your way, but the Knights of the Galactic Republic will. Your evil will not prevail," Obi-Wan replied. Severus chuckled, as he removed his long, black leather gloves, revealing a pair of entirely metal arms. He clapped his metal hands together in mock applause. The sound of the metal clanging together echoed through the room.

"Bravo on your little speech. I can see why they call you the Negotiator. You are a fierce warrior too. The first Jedi to kill a Sith in over a millennium. The man who trained the galaxy's hero. I've been looking forward to battling you almost as much as I look forward to facing the Chosen One and his raw power...that is if Darth Mirima doesn't kill him first," Severus taunted.

"You talk an awful lot," Obi-Wan replied.

"Yes I do, but I can assure that I can do much more than that. I'm looking forward to killing you Kenobi," Severus said, as he ignited his crimson blade. Obi-Wan's blue blade blazed to life and he leapt into battle with the Sith Lord.

Anakin's light saber clashed furiously with Darth Mirima's.

"I've already collected three bodies today. I'm looking forward to adding you and your wire to my collection.

"What the hell are you talking about?" Anakin demanded.

"I'm sure they're discovering the body of their queen as we speak. She and a couple of her handmaidens had to be eliminated. Don't

worry thought, they died quickly," the Sith taunted.

"You murdering coward! I won't let anymore innocent lives be taken by you," Anakin growled.

"We shall see Chosen One. You and Kenobi will not stand in my master's way any longer. The galaxy will tremble in feat at the mention of my name after I kill beloved hero," Mirima said, as she shifter again, this time taking on Obi-Wan's appearance. Her saber locked with his and the Sith smirked evilly, something that looked completely foreign on Obi-Wan's face.

"Can you fight your best friend and mentor?" she taunted.

"You are not Obi-Wan, so I should have no problem, no matter who you try to look like," Anakin spat, as he whipped out of the dead lock and brought his saber down hard. The Sith smirked and flipped back. Anakin stood read to receive her next attack. But she just stood there with that smirk on her face.

"Let's put that theory to test shall we? Can you really fight anyone?" she asked, as she morphed again. Anakin's eyes narrowed and his blood boiled.

"You have a lot of nerve, you evil witch," Anakin growled.

"Oh...now is that anyway to speak to your darling wife?" she taunted, thoroughly enjoying his reaction, as she used the lovely image of his wife...

Obi-Wan's arms shook, as he pushed up against the Sith's crimson blade. Their sabers crackled from the contact, as Obi-Wan struggled against his brute strength.

"Incredible, aren't they?" Severus asked., referring to his arms.

"They are triple the strength of a human and they never tire like yours. You can thank that psychotic bitch, Asaaj Ventress, since she is the one that did this to me. She's lucky Skywalker killed her before I could. I'm sure he granted her a swift death, which she would have not received from me. You, however, will not be spared from an excruciating death," Severus snarled, as he wrapped his metal hand around Obi-Wan's neck. Obi-Wan cried out, as the Sith began choking him. Thinking quickly, Obi-Wan thrusted his knees upward into the Sith's chin. Severus reeled back in pain, releasing Obi-Wan, as he held his sore jaw.

"You'll pay for that Kenobi," Severus growled.

"We'll see, you Sith bastard," Obi-Wan retorted, as he gasped in air. With a fierce battle cry from each, they leapt at each other again, sabers blazing.

Luke and Leia sat on a bench in the museum. Their aunts and grandparents were looking at some exhibit a few feet away.

"Luke, I have that feeling I had last time. Something bad is happening again. Mommy and daddy should have been here by now. And uncle Obi-Wan too," Leia said.

"I know, I feel it too," Luke replied.

"Let's go," Leia suggested.

"Go where?" Luke asked.

"Back to the palace, laser brain," Leia replied.

"I'm not a laser brain. And we're not going. I'm not getting into more trouble," Luke said.

"Fine, be a baby and stay here. I'll go by myself," Leia huffed.

"I'm not a baby! And we'd be in so much trouble if we wandered off again. We'll be grounded forever!" Luke exaggerated in a whiny voice.

"Fine, stay here," Leia said, as she started to stomp off. But she was stopped, as Han and Lando stood in front of her. She suppressed an irritated grow. Why did daddy have to send them to look after them anyway? Those were her thoughts, as the older boys looked down at her.

"Going somewhere princess?" Han taunted.

"Leia and I have a bad feeling that something bad is happening back at the palace and she was going there," Luke tattled.

"Tattle tale," Leia accused.

"You two aren't going anywhere," Lando said, as he and Han led them back to their aunt Lea. Lea saw the boys escorting the twins over and she crossed her arms.

"I think Leia was thinking about wandering off maim," Han said.

"Leia Skywalker, what do you have to say for yourself?" Lea asked sternly.

"Lukie and I have a bad feeling aunt Lea. Something's happening at the palace," Leia insisted. Lea looked at their pleading eyes for a moment and realized that something serious could be happening at the palace. Jeena had been very fussy for the last hour.

"I will go see what's going on at the palace, but you two will stay here with aunt Sola and your grandparents, understood?" Lea asked. The twins nodded reluctantly, as Lea departed for the palace.

Obi-Wan struggled against the brute strength of Darth Severus.

"Face it Kenobi, you are no match for my power," Severus boasted.

"Your strength will only get you so far," Obi-Wan said, as he used the Force to lift a heavy storage bin. Obi-Wan hurled it at Severus and the Sith laughed at him, as he dodged it easily. What Severus hadn't counted on was Obi-Wan's expert control over the object he was lifting. Once he missed, Obi-Wan reversed the object's course and sent it slamming into Severus' back. The Sith growled angrily, as he was sent sprawling to the ground. Severus growled in rage, as he picked himself up. Angrily, he lifted the heavy storage container with one hand and hurled it at Obi-Wan. Obi-Wan easily dodged it by flipping it over. Unfortunately, Severus was right there as he landed and the Sith backhanded Obi-Wan in the jaw. He cried out in pain, as the metal made contact with his face. The Force of the blow sent him flying back into the wall with a hard slam. Obi-Wan gasped for air, trying to regain the wind that was knocked from him. He gingerly touched his sore jaw, which seemed to only be bruised. He knew he was lucky the Sith hadn't' broken it, but his face was sure to be black and blue later. Obi-Wan attempt to gain his bearings was in vain, however, as Severus hoisted him off the ground. His metal hand wrapped around Obi-Wan's neck.

"Any last words, before I crush your bones to powder?" Severus asked.

"You can kill me, but Anakin will stop you. Your master will not succeed," Obi-Wan promised.

"If you think Skywalker scares me, then you are sadly mistaken. His power is nothing compared to mine, mere child's play. I'll have your so called Chosen brat begging for death, before I finally grant him that by ripping his heart from his chest. The bleeding heart of the Chosen One in my hand will make the galaxy tremble in fear. He won't even be recognizable when I'm through with him and his bloodied body will be the example of what happens when you cross a Sith," Severus growled.

"You sadistic bastard. You have no concept about the true power of the Force. If you kill me, I shall become more powerful than you can imagine. And if underestimate Anakin's power, then you will share the same fate as Palpatine, Ventress, Raze, and all the others," Obi-Wan promised. Severus chuckled in evil amusement.

"As entertaining as your delusions are Kenobi, it's time to say goodbye," Severus said.

"Oh I don't think so," Obi-Wan replied, reaching deeply into the Force. Obi-Wan pushed Severus back violently. He called his saber to his hand and ignited the blade. The Sith growled and ignited his own blade, before they engaged in battle again.

Anakin blocked and parried Mirima's every blow. But when opening to strike presented themselves, he hesitated. Mirima laughed evilly.

"You can't attack me...because I look like her. Your love for that useless woman has made you weak and pathetic," Mirima taunted. Anakin scolded himself for allowing her games to effect him.

" *Anakin!"* he heard the call through the Force. It was Padme. She had awakened and she needed him badly. He centered himself in the Force and focused on Padme.

"You're not Padme and I'm done playing your games," Anakin said, as he leapt at her, not holding back at all this time.

Padme awoke to a world of pain and blackness. She quickly determined that she was both blindfolded, as well as gagged. The couldn't see anything and there was a cloth shoved tightly between her teeth, preventing her from speaking. But the pain in her arms was concerning her the most. The shackles were biting into her wrists and her arms were extremely sore. She quickly discovered why, as she moved her feet and found nothing under them. She whimpered and tried to cry for help, but her voice was muffled.

" *Anakin!"* she cried into the Force like he had taught her. She continued to whimper and struggled. Suddenly, she had the terrible feeling that she was being watched. She tensed and whimpered, as she felt a hand brush through her hair and down her cheek. Palo smirked evilly. He had longed for years to possess her as his own. He had watched her from the moment he had met her. He hung on every holonet story, picture, and mention of her. He knew he was what some would considered obsessed and psychotic, for he would do anything to make her his. That was the reason he had agreed to help the Sith. He cared nothing for their ideals or their desire to rule the galaxy. No, he only wanted one thing as payment for his services and she was hanging captive before him. Once Skywalker was dead, he would have his prize that he longed to possess for so long...

Twisted Obsession

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars. It all belongs to George.

AN: Here's chapter 9! Thanks for all the great reviews! Enjoy!

Never Gone II

Chapter 9: Twisted Obsession

Padme whimpered, as the hands traveled down her slender neck to her shoulders. Then, they traveled down her sides until they were resting firmly on her slim hips. Her fear grew, as the person finally spoke. But she could not discern the person's identity, for they were using a device to garble their voice. It sounded scratchy and mechanical, but no less sinister, sending cold shivers of fear down her spine.

"Do you have any idea how long I've waited to make you mine? I've been watching you for years and you never knew. I've wanted you since the moment I first laid eyes on you," the man said, cupping her cheek again.

"Your skin is so soft," the distorted voice said, as the man continued to caress the bare skin on her neck and arms, which were exposed thanks to the sleeveless dress she was wearing. The blood from the cuts on her wrists had stained her forearms. She whimpered, as she felt his hands on the exposed skin under her collarbone. She began shaking her head to try and get the gag off in hopes of screaming for help. But the man stopped her and tightened the gag.

"Now, we can't have that. I wouldn't want to have to punish you for defiance. There's much more entertaining...things I'd rather do to you," he said, as he lowered his lips to the skin above her bosom, placing kisses along her skin.

"I've dreamed of having you for so long. Your husband will not stand in my way much longer. The Sith may not kill him today, but soon...very soon. He will die and you will be mine," the man said...

Anakin could clearly sense his wife's panic and fear through the Force. He slammed his saber down on the Sith, who still tried to taunt him by using Padme's image. But her games were no longer effecting him.

"Tell me where she is! I won't ask again," Anakin demanded in a dangerous tone. The Sith just smirked evilly.

"Your love for that useless woman makes you pathetic," she spat. Anakin knew he was allowing his anger to fuel his movements. He stepped back and used the Force to calm his raging emotions.

" *Use love,"* Qui-Gon had told him many times before. He let his love for Padme wash over him and ebb the anger and fear he felt away. With a renewed resolved, Anakin's saber clashed furiously again with Mirima's. Her eyes widened in fear, as she found herself shadowboxing.

Severus growled, as his saber met in another deadlock with Obi-Wan's he used his immense strength to drive Obi-Wan back against the wall.

"You should be proud Kenobi. You fought gallantly, but I'm afraid your time has expired," Severus taunted, as he forced his blade closer and closer to Obi-Wan's throat.

"I don't think so," a male voice said from behind. Severus turned to find a chocolate haired young man, no more than twenty and a sandy brown haired girl, who looked about nineteen, each with emerald sabers blazing.

"Well, well, fresh meat," Severus said, turning his attention to them. Obi-Wan slipped away and regrouped with the two young Knights.

"Whie, Scout, how did you get here so fast?" Obi-Wan asked.

"We were returning from a mission on Tatooine, so we were close. Master Fisto contacted us," Whie replied.

"Be mindful. He is extremely strong," Obi-Wan said, as they prepared to engage the Sith.

"It doesn't matter if there's one or three of you. I'll take you all down," Severus said confidently, as he engaged the three Knights.

Padme was sobbing now. She could feel the man pressing himself against her back and could feel his hot breath on her neck. Padme's skin crawled and she had to fight a nauseous feeling, as her disgusting captor kissed her neck.

"Unfortunately, I must leave you for now my sweet, Nabooan rose. But we'll be together again soon, next time, forever. I'll be watching you every day, even though you won't even know it," he said, as he pulled out a pair of shears. Holding one of her curls out, he carefully snipped a piece off. He held the lock of hair against his face and inhaled her scent. He tucked the lock of hair away and slipped out.

"We'll meet again soon my rose," the distorted voice said, before he was gone...

Mirima growled in frustration, as she struggled to keep up with the Chosen One. Anakin grew tired of toying with her. He kicked her in the abdomen and she fell flat on her back.

"You've been defeated. It wouldn't be right for me to kill you when you can no longer defend yourself. Why don't you go crawling back

to your master," Anakin said. The Sith's eyes blazed yellow and Padme's image melted away to reveal her true clawdite form.

"I hate you!!!!!" she screamed, as she hurled Force lightning at him. He caught it with his saber easily and deflected it. He swung his saber and brought it down on her. The last thing she saw was his brilliant sapphire blade coming toward her neck. Darth Mirima's headless body fell to the floor.

"Thank you for making my decision to kill you much easier," Anakin said, as he extinguished his saber and headed off through the corridors to find Padme.

Once Lea arrived at the palace, she knew the twins had been right, as there was mass chaos. She rushed inside and found Captain Typho.

"Captain, what is going on?" Lea asked.

"There are two more Sith. Your husband and Anakin are fighting them down in the bowels of the palace. The Queen was murdered this morning, along with Yane and Eirtae," Typho said. Lea gasped in horror, covering his mouth with her hand.

"Where is Padme?" Lea asked.

"We fear that she was captured by the Sith in order to lure Anakin and Obi-Wan to them," Typho said. Lea started to leave, but Typho stopped her.

"I'm sorry milady, but I cannot allow you to go down there," Typho protested. Lea frowned, but stayed where she was, waiting and hoping for her family's safe return...

Once Darth Severus felt Mirima die through the Force, he knew he must follows his master's orders in this event and escape. As his

master had predicted, it seemed that Mirima was no match for the Chosen One and once he had gotten sick of her games, he had gone on the offensive and outmatched her. Using the Force, he detached several metal beams from the ceiling and sent them crashing around the Knights. While they were avoiding the deadly beams, Darth Severus slipped away.

"He got away!" Whie exclaimed in frustration. Obi-Wan laid a hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Anakin must have defeated Darth Mirima, so he fled as his master probably ordered him to. When we return to Coruscant, Anakin and I will be paying a visit to Master Nu at the Temple," Obi-Wan said.

"Why Master Nu?" Scout asked.

"Because before he became Darth Severus, he was Jarec, former padawan to Jocasta Nu," Obi-Wan answered.

"Come on, let's find Anakin and Padme," Obi-Wan said, as the two young people followed him.

"Padme!...Padme!" he called, as he searched the corridors. He heard what sounded like a muffled sobbing. He found the right room and clearly sensed his beloved angel behind it. Anakin pressed the access panel and the door slid open. Anakin's eyes widened in horror, as he saw his wife hanging painfully from her arms, gagged and blindfolded.

"Oh Gods, Padme," Anakin cried. He ignited his saber and cut her down, while catching her in his arms.

"I'm here angel," he told her, as he cradled her in his arms, while removing the gag, blindfold, and the shackles around her wounded wrists. She threw her arms around his neck and cried uncontrollably, burying her face in his chest. Anakin rocked her back and forth, whispering comforting words to her.

"Ani, there was someone...in here...with me," she sobbed.

"All right, everything's okay now. You're going to tell me everything, but we're going to get you to the med center first and get these wounds treated," he replied in a comforting voice, as he lifted her into his arms . On the way out, he met up with Obi-Wan, Scout, and Whie and together, they headed to the main level of the palace.

Anakin paced outside the med center, waiting for the healers to let him in to see his wife. Finally, the healer stepped out to talk to Anakin.

"How is she?" he asked.

"She's going to be fine. We've treated the wounds on her wrists and wrapped them with bacta bandages. Other than that, she has some bruises and a bump on the head. She's going to be fine," the healer said.

"Thank you sir. Can I see her?" Anakin asked.

"Yes, in fact I can release her and have her moved to your quarters. I'd like her to remain in bed for the next day at least though," the healer replied.

"Thank you sir," Anakin said, as he entered the medical ward and found his wife in bed, dressed in a white hospital gown. Anakin helped her into a hover chair and took her to their quarters in the palace. Once he had her settled in their bedroom, he sat next to her on the bed and kissed her forehead.

"Hold me," Padme said, cuddling against him.

"Angel, you need to tell me everything that went on," Anakin said. Padme looked up at him, her beautiful eyes glistening with unshed tears.

"There was someone in the room with me. I couldn't see and he was disguising his voice somehow," Padme began.

"You mean with a device of some kind?" Anakin asked.

"I think so. It sounded garbled and mechanical," she replied.

"What did he say?" Anakin asked. Tears began to stream down her cheeks.

"Oh Anakin," she cried, burying her face in his chest. Anakin wrapped her in his arms tightly.

"Angel, what did this monster say?" Anakin asked gently.

"He...he said that he's been...watching me for...years. He said...that he's been waiting years to make...me his. He said that you wouldn't stand in his way...much longer and that the Sith would kill you soon," she sobbed. Anakin held her tightly and pushed his anger at this person away for the moment. Padme needed his love and comfort the most at them moment.

"He touched me...all over and kissed me," she sobbed, as he rocked her.

"Then he told me he had to leave...but that I would be his soon," she paused, as she reached around and found a piece of hair that was shorter than the rest of her beautiful curls.

"Before he left, he called me...his Nabooan rose and he snipped a piece of my hair off. He said...that he would be watching me...and I wouldn't even know it. I'm so scared Ani," she cried.

"I thought he was going...going to..." she couldn't finish, however, and Anakin tried to calm her down.

"I'm so sorry Padme. I promise that I'll do everything in my power to make sure this man never touches you again. I'll find him and I'll

make sure he's locked up so he can never hurt you again," Anakin told her.

"I know you will. I love you so much...I'm just so frightened that I could lose you. Why would the Sith help this person?" she asked.

"I don't know angel, but I intend to find out. He must be doing something for them in return or working for them," he replied. She sniffed and wiped her tears away.

"Where are the twins?" she asked. He smiled and caressed her cheek.

"Your parents are on their way. I'll go see if they're here and I'll bring them in. I'll talk to Obi-Wan for a minute and fill them in while you spend a little time with them. Then I'll be back and hold you all night," Anakin replied. She nodded.

"I need you," she said.

"I here. I'm not going anywhere, no matter what this man said. The Sith won't win Padme and I will find out who this person is and stop him," Anakin promised.

"I love you, so much," Padme said, clinging to him.

"I love you too, more than anything. You and the twins are my life," Anakin replied, as he lowered his lips to hers and placed a soft, loving kiss on her tender, sweet lips.

"I'll be right back, will you be okay?" he asked. She nodded, but Anakin knew she didn't want to be alone for long.

"I'll be fine. I just need to see my babies," she replied. Anakin smiled and nodded, before getting up and going to get the twins.

"Mommy!" the twins called, bounding to her and hopping on the bed. She welcomed her babies with open arms.

"Oh my angels," Padme said, as she hugged them tightly.

"Mommy, why are there bandages on your wrists?" Luke asked innocently, as Padme brushed his hair out of his eyes.

"Mommy just got a few little cuts on her wrists, but I'll be fine sweetie," she replied.

"Lukie and I felt it again mommy. We knew something bad was happening," Leia told her.

"Everything's okay now honey. Daddy and uncle Obi-Wan made it better again," she assured her daughter. Anakin smiled, as the twins hugged and cuddled with their mother. They brought a smile to her face and it was the first one he had seen all evening.

"You two keep your mom company. I have to go talk to uncle Obi-Wan for a few minutes, ok?" he asked.

"Okay," they chorused, before they began chatting animatedly to their mother. Anakin smiled at Padme, before slipping outside for a few minutes, where Obi-Wan and Lea were waiting.

"How is she?" Lea asked.

"Physically, she's going be fine. Emotionally is a completely different story," Anakin replied.

"All right, what exactly went on while she was captive?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Padme is being stalked...by someone. They were using a device to garble their voice and she was blindfolded, so she has no idea who he was," Anakin replied.

"What did he say?" Lea asked.

"It's not only what he said, but what he did also," Anakin replied.

"Oh no...tell me he...didn't..." Lea trailed off.

"No...no, he didn't go that far. He only...touched her and kissed her," Anakin said, his face showing anguish.

"What did he say?" Obi-Wan asked.

"This man told her that he had been watching her for years. He told her that he has longed for her to be his and that the Sith would soon eliminate me so he could claim her as his own. The sick bastard even cut off a lock of her hair for a souvenir! If there has been some sick asshole watching her for years, how would I not know about it? He called her his Nabooan rose," Anakin said in disgust.

"You may not know he's been watching her, because he may have such an insignificant presence in the Force that he cannot be distinguished from the average non-Force user. And you must remember, that much of Padme's life has always been on display for the galaxy," Obi-Wan said.

"But why would the Sith help this person? They don't do anything for anyone unless they are getting something in return. If they aren't a Force user, then what could they possibly be doing for the Sith that would be of any use to them?" Anakin asked.

"That is what we must find out," Obi-Wan replied. Lea was very quiet, a look of intense contemplation on her face.

"Lea, what is it?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Anakin, you said that this person called Padme his "Nabooan Rose", correct?" she asked.

"Yes, that's what Padme said," Anakin replied.

"Does that mean something to you?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Possibly. For much of Padme's career, people have either loved her or hated her. After the blockade, some began calling her Naboo's Rose and only someone who lived on Naboo would really call her that. It is very possible that this person became obsessed with her during the time that she was queen," Lea said, letting that sink in, before continuing.

"The criminal mind is an interesting thing. While one who is obsessed with another can be very sick minded and even psychotic, they can also be brilliant. This person's obsession could have very well started out as just a harmless crush at first. He could have followed her career over the years through the Holonet or even public appearances. Then, as he watched her over the years, his crush grew in an obsession. At one point, he may have even thought he had some kind of chance with her...and then you entered picture," Lea said to Anakin.

"Then his dreams of being with her were crushed and he became angry and his mental state deteriorated so much that he turned to the Sith for help. This is all theory of course and still does not explain why the Sith would help him. But if this person is obsessed with Padme and even if he does have no Force powers, he is very, very dangerous," Lea warned. Anakin and Obi-Wan nodded in agreement.

"Have you told her about the Queen and her handmaidens yet?" Obi-Wan asked. Anakin shook his head.

"No, she's already been so traumatized. I'm going to tell her after we put the twins to bed. It's going to devastate her," Anakin said, remorse lacing his voice. Obi-Wan patted his shoulder.

"We will get to the bottom of this Anakin, I promise," Obi-Wan replied.

"Thank you both, you don't know how much your support means to us," Anakin replied. Lea hugged him.

"We're family, it's what we do," Lea told him. Anakin nodded with a small smile, before returning to his quarters. He prepared himself for the task of giving his beloved angel even more bad news...

A Time of Mourning

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars.

AN: Here's chapter 10! Thanks for all the great reviews!

Never Gone II

Chapter 10: A Time of Mourning

Anakin entered their bedroom and allowed himself a small smile. The twins were avidly telling her all about their day. He sadly knew that the genuine smile that she held for their babies would soon disappear once he told her about the murders. He sighed dejectedly and ran a hand through his shaggy hair. Padme's eyes met his and she immediately knew something was wrong.

"Okay, you two. It's time for bed. Go get ready and mommy and daddy will tuck you in," Padme told them. The twins scampered off and Anakin sat down next to her.

"Ani, what's wrong? Has something else happened?" she asked.

"Yes, but it best I tell you after we put the twins to bed. You shouldn't be out of bed, so I'll bring them in to tell you good night and then I'll tuck them in," Anakin said, as he kissed her forehead and went to check on the twins. The twins came in and hugged and kissed their mother good night, before their father tucked them in. After the twins were in bed, Anakin returned to their bedroom.

"Anakin, what's going on? What's happened?" she asked. Anakin sat down next to her and pulled her into his arms.

"There is no easy way to tell you this angel, so I'll have to come right out and say it," Anakin began. Padme looked into his eyes, as he prepared to tell her about whatever terrible thing had occurred.

"Padme, the Sith murdered Queen Apilana, as well as Eirtae and Yane," Anakin told her gently. Fresh tears pooled in her eyes.

"No...oh please no..." Padme cried. Anakin pulled her tightly against his chest, as she began sobbing. He rocked her gently and stroked her hair.

"I'm so sorry angel. I wish I could have saved them," Anakin said, now freely crying with her. She sniffed and looked up at him.

"It's not your fault, don't you dare blame yourself. You save so...many other lives by defeating her," Padme replied.

"I'm going to find Dooku and the rest of them. I'm going to find them and stop them from hurting the people I love," Anakin promised.

"I know you will. I always feel safe when I'm with you and so do the twins," Padme replied.

"I promise I'm going to find this bastard that held you captive too. I should have never let him touch you in the first place," Anakin said.

"Ani, I won't have you blaming yourself for something that you couldn't prevent in any way. I know that you'll always save me when I'm in trouble, but you're not all powerful. I love you and I feel safe and protected when you're near. As long as I have you, I will always be okay," Padme replied, as she stroked her fingers through his thick hair.

"What did I ever do to deserve an amazingly wonderful and beautiful woman like you?" he asked, with a half smile.

"We were made for each other, remember? I'm yours...no one else..." she trembled from her earlier experience with her mysterious stalker. He held her tightly.

"My heart belongs to you and yours belongs to me. No one can ever tear us apart, I won't let them," he promised.

"Neither will I," she replied, as their lips met in a passionate kiss.

"You need your rest angel. Sleep and I'll be here," he told her, as they crawled under the covers. Anakin held her tightly against his chest and the soft, steady beat of his heart lulled her to sleep. He kissed her hair and slowly drifted off to sleep as well...

Lea sat at her vanity brushing out her long, light brown hair. She wore a long, jade green nightgown that brought out her eyes and Obi-Wan once again found himself captivated by her beauty. Lea sighed sadly, as Obi-Wan undressed and slipped on a pair of sleep pants. He noticed the dejected look on her face and placed his hands on her shoulders.

"Lea, what's wrong?" he asked.

"Everything," she replied. Obi-Wan smiled slightly, as she stood up and turned to him.

"I think you will have to be more specific, love," he replied. As she was about to speak again, they heard Jeena whimper from her bedroom.

"She's been fussy all night. I could barely get her to calm down," Lea said.

"The vibrations in the Force have made her uneasy. Luke and Leia are beginning to understand what they mean, but she doesn't know yet. I will go calm her and get her back to sleep. Then, you are going to tell me what's bothering you," he promised, as he headed for Jeena's room.

"Hey...hey, it's all right," Obi-Wan said, as he lifted his fussy little girl into his arms.

"Scawed...daddy," she whimpered.

"Scared? Oh there's nothing to be scared of sweetheart. Everything's fine now, my little one," Obi-Wan soothed her, as he rocked her gently. Obi-Wan sent her warm waves of love through the Force. They calmed her nerves and soothed her. Before long, she was fast asleep, this time, her restlessness gone. Gently, he laid her back in her crib and kissed her hair. She barely stirred and Obi-Wan quietly slipped out.

"Is she asleep?" Lea asked.

"She's fine love. I calmed her down and she's sleeping soundly now," Obi-Wan assured her. Lea nodded and pulled the bedclothes back. She and Obi-Wan climbed in and cuddled together.

"Now, what's wrong?" Obi-Wan asked, as he wrapped his arm securely around her waist.

"I don't know...it's Padme I guess. How much more is she going to have to endure Obi-Wan? Ever since she was Queen, she's been through so much. I just worry about her so much. She's more like my baby sister than my cousin," Lea replied.

"I know my love. But she will be fine, Anakin will see to that," Obi-Wan replied.

"I know he will. It...this person just scares me Obi-Wan. I mean, I've always known that there could be a very real possibility of this happening. Padme's been in the public eye since she was just a girl and she's always been very beautiful. We've all known that there could be dangerous people out there trying to kill her. But to know there's some psychotic lunatic out there that has been watching her for all these years is almost too much. He took a lock of her hair...what kind of sick bastard does that?" Lea asked in frustration.

"A very disturbed and obsessed individual, just as you described to Anakin and I earlier. There is no doubt that this person is very dangerous, especially if he is working with the Sith. Perhaps, he is

even a little more dangerous, since Anakin and I cannot distinguish his Force signature from the average's person's," Obi-Wan replied.

"That's what worries me. At least you're able to sense the Sith," Lea replied. Obi-Wan smiled thinly.

"Well, for the most part. They have gotten very good at concealing themselves," Obi-Wan said.

"I want them to go away and leave us all alone," Lea said, snuggling against him.

"They will, my love. We will see to it. Things could be much worse...much, much worse," Obi-Wan said.

"I know if it hadn't been for you and Anakin, Palpatine could have won. If it hadn't been for Anakin, Palpatine might still be around if it hadn't been for you, he might have executed order 66 and there would be no Jedi or KGR. Why can't they see that they're wrong?" Lea asked.

"They don't want to see what most of us have already seen. Admitting that you're wrong is a very hard thing to do sometimes. I know from experience. Had I not met you, I would have never known true love and I might have continued to blindly follow the Council down the stagnant path they continue on today. You save me from a much worse fate," Obi-Wan said, stroking her cheek.

"Me?" Lea asked in amazement.

"Of course you. Think about it love. If Anakin and Padme had never crash landed on Dantooine, we might have never found you. I would have never fallen in love and never seen how wonderful love is. I probably would have pushed Anakin away to curb the brotherly attachment that had formed and I never would have trained him. Then, the Sith would have killed both he and Padme the first chance they got and plunged the galaxy into darkness. So, my love, it was

you who indirectly saved us all," Obi-Wan said, as he kissed her tenderly.

"Oh Ben," Lea whispered, as he feathered kisses down her neck. And the passion burned as brightly between them, as the day it was kindled nearly seven years ago...

Three days had passed since the death of the Queen and two of her handmaidens. Even after her own terrible ordeal, Padme took on the responsibility as Senator of selecting someone to finish Queen Apilana's term. She had many handmaidens and nobles to choose from. But her decision came rather quickly and she chose Sabe Valerte, her former decoy during her time as Queen. She knew that Sabe would finish Apilana's term with dignity and grace, until the next election in which a new Queen would be elected. Sabe's coronation would commence in a few weeks, but the mood on Naboo this day was somber, as the people mourned. People crowded in the streets of Theed, as the Queen's casket was carried through the streets in a long march of mourning to the cemetery. Eirtae and Yane's caskets followed Apilana's, as they died in her service and thus deserved the same honored burial as the Queen. Following them was the mourning procession of loved ones. Yane and Eirtae's families followed closely to their caskets. Next, following the families, were all the handmaidens that served in the palace with the Queen, Yane, and Eirtae. Sabe was included in this group, bringing up the rear. Following the many palace officials participating in the procession was Padme, dressed in a long, black gown. She walked slowly with her husband by her side, leading her on his arm. Luke and Leia walked ahead of them, somber looks on their faces. They had fond memories of Yane and Eirtae, as well as Apilana, as all three had enjoyed having them around in the palace immensely when Padme was on Naboo. Following them was Obi-Wan, Lea and little Jeena. Behind them, Han and Lando followed, having been put in charge of security by Anakin. The procession soon arrived at the burial site, where a holy man began conducting the funeral. The three caskets were placed above their open plots. The holy man

blessed the deceased and assured all that the young women were at peace now in the embrace of the Force. The holy man concluded the funeral with a prayer for peace and then motioned for the caskets to be lowered. As the three caskets were slowly lowered into the ground, Padme buried her faced in Anakin's chest and cried, as her three friends were laid to rest. Anakin held her tightly, gently stroking her hair. Neither of them was aware of the pair of eyes watching them, for the person they belonged to was there under invitation as the Chancellor's personal representative. Business in the Senate had risen and Bail had not been able to attend. The mass of people began to break away, slowly leaving the site. Anakin and Padme stood there for a few moments together, with their two children beside them. Luke and Leia looked up at their mother and wrapped their little arms around her waist. Padme leaned down and they wrapped their arms around her neck, hugging her tightly.

"Thank you angels," she said, as she sniffed and wiped her tears away. Anakin smiled at his little family and knelt down to them.

"Why don't you two go wait over there with Han and Lando. Mommy and daddy will be there in a few minutes," Anakin said. The twins nodded and trotted off together. As they walked across the field, they ran into Palo, who was heading in the direction where their parents stood.

"Where are you going?" Luke asked.

"I'm going to offer your mother my condolences, as well as Chancellor Organa's regards too," Palo replied.

"She doesn't need you. She has our daddy," Leia sneered at him, before trotting off with her brother.

"That was rude Leia," Luke chided.

"I don't like him Lukie," Leia replied.

"I don't either, but mom always tells us not to be rude," Luke replied.

"I don't care. He looks at mommy funny and I don't like it," Leia said.

"Don't like what kiddo?" Han asked.

"Palo," she answered.

"Why not?" Lando asked.

"He looks at mommy funny and he always seems to try and be around her," Luke answered.

"Well, have you talked to your dad about it?" Han asked.

"Yeah, but he says he has to be around her, because he's the Chancellor's aid. And he says that mommy loves him," Leia replied.

"Well, he's right. But tell ya what, how about Lando and I keep an eye on tall, dark and boring? It can be our secret," Han replied. Leia looked at him suspiciously.

"Really?" she asked.

"Sure kid. If you think he's bad news, then maybe he is. Your dad's already got a lot to worry about with all those Sith Lords running around. It can be our secret," Han said.

"Wow, we can be like real investigators! Just like dad and uncle Obi-Wan!" Luke said in excitement.

"All right, keep your britches on squirt. We gotta keep a low profile, cause if Lord of the dull over there thinks we're onto him and he is bad news, then that will bad news for us," Han said.

"Han's right, this is hush, hush, just between the four of us, okay?" Lando asked. The twins nodded.

"Milady, my deepest condolences to you. I know you have lost three very close friends," Palo said.

"Thank you Palo," Padme replied, as she still clung to her husband's side.

"I know this is a terrible time to ask, but the Chancellor wishes to know if you'll be returning to Coruscant soon?" Palo asked.

"Yes, very soon. There is much we both need to do back on Coruscant. You can tell him to expect our return the day after tomorrow," Padme replied.

"I shall tell him. Thank you Senator," Palo bowed to her, completely ignoring Anakin. As Palo retreated from them, he clutched something in his pocket and slowly took it out. He rubbed the lock of hair against his cheek and inhaled the scent.

"Soon my rose...soon," he whispered...

"Are you ready?" Anakin asked gently. She nodded and let him take her arm.

"Yes, we have to be getting to the mourning reception," Padme said, grudgingly.

"No you don't angel. I think you've been through enough today. Just say the word and I'll take you home to the Lake Country," Anakin said.

"I wish I could Ani, but I need to be there for the families of the victims," she replied. Anakin nodded and led her back to the speeder that was waiting for them with Captain Typho at the wheel.

Anakin and Padme greeted mourners at the palace reception for what seemed like hours, before the people began to thin out. Anakin glanced worriedly at his wife, knowing that she was simply exhausted.

"I'm going to get the twins and then we're going to our quarters. You are exhausted," he told her. She looked up at him and nodded gratefully. Padme sipped at some water and sighed tiredly.

"Here's the datapad you asked for," Lea said, handing it to her. Padme smiled.

"Thanks Lea," Padme replied.

"Are you holding up okay?" Lea asked, laying a hand on her shoulder.

"I'll be fine, thanks," Padme said, as she set her glass down and turned the device on. A message instantly appeared on the screen...a message typed in a big font and crimson colored letters. Padme eyes scanned the words and she dropped the pad with a startled cry.

"Padme, what is it?" Lea asked in alarm, as she picked up the pad. Obi-Wan and Anakin were immediately by their sides, as Lea read the message. Anakin wrapped his arm around his frightened wife, as she clung to him tightly.

"What does it say Lea?" Anakin asked.

" *I was watching you today. You were beautiful as always in that black gown. I found myself fantasizing about what was underneath. I want you so much it pains me...but as I inhale the scent from your lock of hair, it brings me solace and the reality that you'll soon be mine. I long to touch and taste that beautiful, soft skin again...and I will again soon my rose...very soon..."*

"Oh God Anakin, he was watching us...he could be...anyone," Padme sobbed. Anakin closed his eyes and pushed his anger away.

"Everything's going to be all right angel, I'm not leaving your side," Anakin assured her, as he held her tightly in his arms.

"Captain Typho, see if you can determine the origins of this message. It is likely untraceable, but we must find out anything we can," Obi-Wan said, handing the datapad to the security officer.

"Yes sir," Typho replied. Anakin kissed her forehead and started helping her toward the exit.

"Can you look after the twins for a few minutes? I'm going to get her calmed down and then I'll come get them," Anakin asked.

"Of course Anakin, take your time. Obi-Wan and I'll look after them," Lea replied.

"Thank you," Anakin replied, as he calmly led his wife out.

"What terrible person would do such things to Padme?" Palo asked in horror, as he approached Lea and Obi-Wan.

"I don't know...but both Anakin and I intend to find out," Obi-Wan replied, a deadly serious tone in his voice...

Dark Secrets

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars.

AN: Hey everyone! Here's chapter 11! Thanks for all the great reviews!

Never Gone II

Chapter 11: Dark Secrets

Anakin held her trembling form against his own. She had calmed down somewhat, considering she had been near hysterical.

"Come on angel, let's get you ready for bed. You're exhausted," Anakin said.

"I need to tuck the twins in first," Padme replied.

"Lea's bringing them up, I just commed her. I can take care of them," Anakin replied.

"I know, but I won't have this monster stealing my time with my children. I always tuck them in and they already sense that something's wrong," Padme replied.

"Okay, let's get ready for bed and then we'll tuck our children in together like we always do," Anakin said, with a smile, as he pulled his tunic over his head. As Anakin unbuckled his belt and set his light saber on the bedside table, Padme still found herself reluctant to undress.

"What if he's watching me right now?" Padme asked, paranoia creeping up on her. Anakin pulled his sleep pants on and then pulled her into his arms.

"Not here angel, not when we're in private. He watches you when you're in public and when there's tons of other people around, because he knows that I would sense him watching you otherwise. He knows that I can't distinguish his Force signature from the average person's. He can't see you right now. You're safe and I'm here, as I always will be," Anakin told her. Padme melted into his embrace, relishing the feel of his strong, protective arms around her. Carefully, Anakin helped her out of her dress and undergarments an into a long, lavender nightgown. They heard the twins come in and they rounded up their rambunctious five-year-olds up and put them to bed. As Padme tucked them in, she kissed them both on the forehead.

"Good night my angels," Padme said.

"Mommy, are you okay?" Luke asked worriedly. Padme smiled thinly.

"I'm fine sweetheart, especially since your daddy is here with us," Padme replied, as she felt Anakin's arms wrap around her waist.

"Mommy's just tired. She'll be fine, I promise," Anakin told them, as he kissed them both. If there was ever one thing that Luke and Leia were sure of, it was that they and their mother were always safe when their father was near. Anakin and Padme quietly stepped out and closed the twin's door quietly. Artoo was in the twins' room watching over them as he always did and Threepio was shut down for the night. Anakin glanced over at Padme and saw that she was practically walking in her sleep. He swept her up into his arms and started for the bedroom.

"Come on angel. You're dead on your feet," Anakin said.

"I don't know why I'm so tired," she replied.

"Because emotional and mental stress takes a much heavier toll than anything physical," Anakin replied. He laid her in bed and climbed in next to her.

"Hold me," Padme said sleepily. Anakin pulled her against his chest and held her tightly.

"Sleep angel. I'll be here," he whispered to her, planting a kiss on her cheek. Padme fell asleep almost instantly and Anakin was not far behind her.

Several days passed before Darth Severus could bring his ship out of hyperspace. His master's secret weapon was being constructed in such remote space and so far out in the outer rim that it was several days journey from the mid rim planets. Filling his view screen now was his master's partially completed weapon. Originally, it had been Sidious objective, but his master was realizing it. And he was doing a much better job that Sidious would have. Palpatine had planned to construct the weapon using his clone troopers. But his master was using his army of droids, thus speeding up the construction immensely. Droids never tired and could work around the clock. And when they needed replacements, they were provided by Aron Gunray. The Death Star, as it had been dubbed, was seventy-five percent complete. After identifying himself, his ship was allowed to dock. When he stepped out, Panaka and Tarkin were there to greet him.

"I see Darth Mirima has not returned with you," Tarkin said.

"No, it seems she was no match for the Chosen One," Severus said.

"It seems that our inside contact has managed to create an intense amount of fear in the Senator. The Chosen One's focus is now on finding this person that is stalking his wife, even through that person is right in front of him. With his sole attention focused on protecting her, it will make our conquest even easier," Severus concluded.

"Then Palo is doing better than we predicted?" Panaka asked.

"So it would seem," Severus replied.

"His obsession with Amidala could work for us or against us. He seems unstable," Tarkin said.

"He is unstable and even as far as psychotic perhaps," a woman said, as she entered the room.

"Ah Lady Jamilla," Tarkin greeted.

"General Tarkin," she replied.

"So, you think that Palo's dealings will work in favor of us?" Tarkin asked.

"I do. I believe he will at least go undiscovered until it is far too late and he has the Senator in his grasp, at which time, you can finally bring down the Chosen One," Jamilla said.

"You have a great deal of hate towards Amidala," Jamilla mentioned.

"Can you honestly blame me?" Jamilla asked.

"I suppose not," Tarkin replied.

"My entire term as queen was filled with discontent, because I failed to be anything like Amidala. Everyday, I was compared to her and everything I did was scrutinized, people asking how Amidala would do it. I lived in her shadow and when I denounced the Republic as a failing order of government, I was tossed out like garbage and forced to leave my home planet for my safety. She did nothing to stop it. She was too busy wrapped up in her own life with her dashing husband. So yes, seeing Naboo's precious Rose suffer is a bit of retribution for me. I am tired of living in her shadow. I am tired of being known as a failed queen who couldn't live up to Amidala's stellar reputation, couldn't compete with her beauty, and the fact that I became despised by my people, while she is adored. They were electing Apilana even before my term was done and she thought it was for the best. That my views toward the Republic had no place in the political ring. Amidala deserves to suffer just as much as her

husband does, since they are the reason we are all here in hiding like some fugitives or criminals when all we wanted to do was simply bring about a new and better order of government," Jamilla said.

"Do not worry my dear, the Sith shall succeed. We will crush both Skywalker and Amidala and then the Republic will crumble in the wake of their destruction," a reverent voice said, as he entered. Severus and the others bowed slightly to their leader and master.

"Master Dooku, Mirima has failed, but Palo has seemingly succeeded better than we expected," Severus reported.

"I know, things are going just as I have foreseen. You did well against Kenobi. Had it not been for those two brats interfering, you would have defeated him," Dooku said. Severus' confidence bolstered at Dooku's approval.

"Thank you my master. Wh

at is thy bidding?" Severus asked.

"Malina is already readying Darth Zana to face the Chosen One with you. For now, we simply wait for the right time to strike again," Dooku said.

"Yes my master," Severus answered.

The room was dark and the figure stood silently in the center, awaiting her next challenge. The light came up a bit, revealing a petite young woman with a slight figure. She had long, dark hair, black as night and a pair of eyes the same color when they weren't bleeding Sithly yellow. She was beautiful and one might underestimate her, for she looked like no threat at all. But to underestimate her would be a grave mistake. The attack droids came alive, nearly twenty of them. Her red saber blazed to life and she performed an aerial flip into the center of them. She demonstrated that she was a force to be reckoned with, as she

proceeded to perform a series of deadly moves. She dismantled most of the droids with her fighting skills and a few with her saber. It was easy to see why Dooku had chosen to train Darth Zana, for she was an expert in every form of martial arts known and she was a deadly weapon. Her general hate for all that was good and pure also made a very attractive apprentice to Dooku and thus why she was known as being one of his top three apprentices', along with Malina and Severus.

"You destroyed those droids in a matter of seconds. Master will be impressed," Malina said.

"They were nothing. Perhaps you could give me an actual challenge. I'm more than ready to face the Chosen One," Zana replied.

"You are ready when I say you are," Malina said, as she ignited her saber. The crimson sabers clashed furiously, as the two woman fought. Zana furiously kicked Malina hard in the abdomen, knocking her off her feet. Zana smiled evilly, as she loomed over her master's top apprentice.

"Perhaps you need to be replaced Malina. We both know that I'm much stronger," Zana taunted. Malina showed her viciousness and why she had earned her place as Dooku's top apprentice. She unleashed a huge amount of Force lightning on the smaller woman, pouring it into her relentlessly. Zana writhed in pain, as Malina taught her who was in charge.

"Your overconfidence will get you killed, you sniveling fool! You dare to challenge me?! I could kill you right now and I should for your stupidity alone!" Malina screamed, as she kicked Zana in the face, bloodying her lip and nose.

"Get out of my sight, you pathetic weakling. Come back when you're ready to prepare to face the Chosen One. Underestimating him will get you killed and you will have to learn to counter his light side use of the Force with an equivalent use of the dark side of the Force or

you are as good as dead when he comes into his true powers as he did against Palpatine and Darth Raze," Malina said.

"Yes master," Zana said begrudgingly, as she left to clean her wounds.

A few days had passed since the Skywalker and Kenobi families had returned to Coruscant. Padme resumed her duties in the Senate and Anakin and Obi-Wan resumed their own duties. The Senate had adjourned for the day and Padme was making her way through the crowded building to her office, a stack of datapads in her arms. She was so glad the day was over and as usual, she couldn't wait to get home to Anakin and her children. It seemed that all the Senate had done in the last few days is bicker about the return of the Sith and every other little thing they could manage to disagree on. Suddenly, someone plowed into her and sent her things flying out of her arms.

"Oh I am so terribly sorry milady," Palo apologized, as he scrambled to retrieve her belongings from the floor.

"It's all right Palo, I'm sorry too. I wasn't doing a very good job of watching my step," Padme replied. Palo handed her things to her and smiled.

"Can I help you to your office?" he asked.

"No thank you, I can manage. And Anakin should be along in any minute. Thank you anyway," Padme said, as she headed off.

"You're very welcome Senator. I suppose I shall see you tomorrow," Palo replied, with a slight bow. Padme nodded and headed for her office, unaware of Palo's penetrating stare against her back. After she was out of slight, Palo slipped off to his office. Once inside, he raised the lights and locked the door. He stepped over to the bookcase behind his desk and slipped through a very small opening behind the bookcase. Once there, he raised the lights, revealing a room the size of small, walk in closet. But it was what adorned the

room and walls that would have sent chills down anyone's spine. The walls were plastered with holo images of Padme from various appearances the Holonet had captured. Also adorning the walls were every holo clipping about her or even ones that merely mentioned her name. In the holos where she appeared with Anakin, he was either cut out or blacked out. And even scarier than all those were the various paintings of her that he had created himself. He observed them all, his first one ever being of her the day she had first appeared as Queen. They progressed slowly after that, as she grew from a girl queen and into the woman Senator that she was. His two most recent ones hung proudly. The first one was of her at the most recent celebration in the beautiful gown she had worn that night. And the newest one still rested on his easel. He took the cover off, revealing her form as his captive. Bound, blindfolded, and gagged. Arms bleeding and tears streaming down her cheeks, as she hung by her arms from the ceiling. He pulled her lock of hair from his pocket and smoothed it against his face, while inhaling the glorious scent. After tucking the lock of hair away in his pocket again, he dimmed the lights and slipped out into the main part of his office, continuing with his normal duties for the Chancellor...

Padme smiled brightly, as Anakin entered her office.

"Hey," he greeted, with a smile.

"Hi," she replied, as she stood up to give him a hug.

"You about done?" he asked.

"Yes, I just finished writing my rebuttal to the Council's petition to revoke the law banning them from taking children. I just have to send it," she replied.

"Well, you could deliver it personally. I'm actually supposed to meet Obi-Wan there. We're going to see if Master Nu will speak to us and tell us anything about Jarec. We don't really know if she'll have any

useful information, in fact, I'm pretty sure she won't. But you know how thorough Obi-Wan likes to be," Anakin replied. She nodded.

"All right, I think I will tag along," Padme said. Anakin smiled.

"Good, let's go get the ankle biters from school and then head that way," Anakin replied. She nodded, as he leaned down and kissed her lips passionately. Truthfully, he was glad she was coming. He didn't like her being alone at home, even with all Captain Typho's security. And he knew that she had not been fond of being alone lately either. As he broke the lengthy kiss, Padme opened her eyes.

"Wow, what was that for?" she asked, referring to his zealous kiss.

"Because I love you, more than anything," he replied. She smiled and kissed his softly again.

"I love you too Ani...so much," she replied. He smiled back, before offering his arm to her. She accepted and they left together.

"Daddy, what are we doing here?" Leia asked, as they climbed the steps to the Temple entrance.

"We're here to see some people princess. It shouldn't take long," Anakin answered.

"Is this the Jedi Temple daddy?" Luke asked.

"It is Luke," Anakin replied.

"It looks old and dingy," Leia said, crinkling her nose.

"Leia! That's not nice," Padme scolded.

"Sorry mommy, but it does. Do people actually live here?" she asked.

"Yes Leia, now you both have promised to be on your best behavior. We haven't forgotten that promise already, have we?" Padme asked sternly.

"No mommy," they replied in unison, while Anakin had to suppress a chuckle. They met Obi-Wan at the top of the stairs, who was currently speaking with three other people the twins had seen briefly here and there, as well as Master Yoda, whom they were both fond of.

"Hi master Yoda!" Luke and Leia said cheerily. The wise old master chuckled.

"Good it is to see you Skywalker younglings. Growing fast you are. Not so long ago it was that smaller than me, you were," Yoda said, with a chuckle. Leia giggled and Luke proceeded to boast.

"I'm gonna be as tall as daddy someday!" Luke announced .

"What business have you come to bother us with today?" Master Jill asked harshly.

"As I was explaining before, we wish to speak with Master Nu about her former apprentice Jarec. He has turned to the dark side and has become Darth Severus. I fought him and he is extremely powerful. We wish to speak to her and see if she can tell us anything of importance," Obi-Wan explained.

"I doubt there will be much she can tell you," Mace replied.

"Just the same, Anakin and I would feel better if we talk to her," Obi-Wan replied.

"Then why if it is you and Anakin that need to speak to her, has he felt the need to bring the Senator and his younglings here with him?" Master Kuro sneered.

"In light of recent events, I've been leery about leaving my wife and children alone," Anakin replied.

"Ah yes, I'm sure you are referring to the predicament the Senator found herself in. My, my, Senator, how your past has come back to haunt you," Kuro sneered.

"What is that supposed to mean?" Padme asked.

"The price of being in the public eye and so outspoken. It has come back to haunt you," Kuro reiterated.

"Back off Kuro," Anakin warned, his jaw clenching, as he wrapped his arm protectively around Padme's waist.

"Your reaction to this is the very reason that we have preached against attachment," Kuro taunted.

"We came here to see Master Nu. Could you kindly show us to her?" Obi-Wan interjected to avoid more confrontation.

"This way," Mace said stoically.

At that particular time of the day, Master Nu happened to be meditating in the Room of a Thousand Fountains. As they entered the magnificent room, Luke and Leia looked around in awe.

"What is this place?" Luke asked.

"It is the Room of a Thousand Fountains," Mace announced, a bit of pride in his voice. Leia looked at him skeptically.

"Master, is there really 1000 fountains? I mean, has anyone ever counted them? What if there's 999 and no one wants to admit it. I mean no one wants to say the room of 999 fountains cause 1000 is much more impressive," Leia said. Anakin could swear that Mace was turning red. Master Jill sneered and the dark woman fumed.

Anakin couldn't suppress his laughter, so he collapsed into what sounded like a very fake coughing spell. Obi-Wan and Padme were struggling to keep straight faces, but Master Yoda made no attempt to hide his amusement at the inquisitive child's question.

"Inquisitive you are, young Leia. Assure you I do, that a 1000 fountains there are. Counted them myself I have," Yoda said, with a chuckle. Leia beamed.

"Wow. Have you ever seen so many fountains in one place daddy?" she asked, her eyes shining up at him. He leaned down and picked her up.

"No, I haven't princess," he replied, as he kissed her cheek.

"Maybe if you would properly discipline your children, they wouldn't be so mouthy," Kuro said in disgust.

"Our children are just fine, dark woman. My wife and I don't need parenting tips and certainly not from you," Anakin retorted, as an elderly woman approached.

"Hello Master Nu," Obi-Wan said, bowing.

"Hello Obi-Wan. What brings you and your family here?" Jocasta asked.

"We've come to ask about your former apprentice, Jarec. As you are probably aware, I faced him about ten days ago. He goes by Darth Severus now and we were just wondering if you could tell us anything about him that would be useful," Obi-Wan asked.

"I'm afraid I can't offer much. He was a difficult apprentice and idolized Dooku. Once Dooku chose to leave the order, Jarec followed and I have not seen or heard from him since. The only evidence I had that he was actually alive came when there was news of your battle against him. I'm afraid I can't offer anymore," Jocasta answered. Obi-Wan nodded.

"Thank you Master Nu," Obi-Wan replied.

"Well, since your business here is finished, you can kindly leave now," Master Jill said.

"Our business has concluded," Padme said, as she handed a datapad to him.

"This is my rebuttal against your petition to remove Force sensitive children from their families," Padme said. Master Jill sneered at her, but wisely kept his distance from her thanks to Anakin's warning stare. Luke and Leia had been staring peculiarly at Mace for the last few moments and finally Mace paid them attention.

"Do you have a question Luke and Leia?" Mace asked.

"Master Windu, how come you have no hair?" Leia asked

"Because I choose not too," he replied

"Nah uh, that's not what our daddy says. He told us your hair ran away from you," Luke replied. Anakin covered Luke's mouth and laughed nervously.

"Kids...I don't know where they get this stuff," Anakin replied, while Mace glared at him.

"But daddy you said his hair fell out because it got bored with him," Leia chirped.

"All right you too, that's enough. I apologize Master Windu," Padme said, as she picked Luke up.

"We should be going," Obi-Wan said, trying to keep a straight face. Somehow, the three adults managed to hold their laughter until they arrived home. Once the twins were out of ear shot, the three of them began to laugh hysterically. Lea looked at them like they were crazy until they told her why they were laughing and she joined them.

Laughter had been something they had been lacking in recent days and it was a very welcome thing...

Heavy Tension

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars.

AN: Here's chapter 12! Thanks for all the great reviews! You guys are great!

Never Gone II

Chapter 12: Heavy Tension

Padme continued to giggled, as she snuggled against her husband. They were still laughing in the late hour of the night. For the last few hours, they had laughed and loved each other, as passion's spell had taken them. The twins had brought them a needed release, just by being themselves.

"I love you," Padme said, as she cuddled against his bare chest.

"I love you too. And I love seeing you smile again," Anakin replied, as he kissed her hair.

"Well, what is there not to smile about? I have the most wonderful, handsome husband. And the two most wonderful children," Padme replied, as she kissed him softly.

"We should get to sleep. Our wonderful children will be up bright and early as usual," Anakin said.

"I think that's probably a good idea," Padme replied.

"Good night my angel," Anakin said.

"Good night, my Knight in shining armor," Padme replied, as they drifted off to sleep in each other's arms.

The next morning, Padme sipped at her caf, while Luke and Leia ate their breakfast. Anakin came into the kitchen and kissed her tenderly.

"Morning," Padme said, as she ruffled her fingers through his damp hair.

"Morning angel," he replied, before sitting down at the table. Padme dished him up some of the breakfast casserole she'd made and sat down with her family. Anakin poured some shuura juice in his glass and then took a big bite of his breakfast.

"Mmm...you, my wonderful wife, are a wonderful cook," Anakin said, as he ate hungrily. Padme smiled.

"Anything for my family," Padme said, as her eyes teared.

"Mommy, are you okay?" Luke asked. Padme smiled, pushing the tears back.

"I'm fine, my sweet boy," she replied. Luke and Leia didn't really look convinced, but they went back to eating. The twins were finishing up and Anakin decided it was time for him to find out what was bothering his wife, even through he had a pretty good idea.

"Hey Threepio, can you help the twins get dressed and ready for school?" Anakin asked.

"Of course master Ani," Threepio replied.

"You two go with Threepio. Daddy needs to talk to mommy for a few minutes," Anakin said. The twins scampered out.

"I should get ready for my meetings," Padme said, as she stood up. Anakin pulled her down into his lap, preventing her escape.

"You my love, are not going anywhere. You barely touched your breakfast or any of your meals yesterday. I'll not have you making yourself sick," Anakin said.

"I'm fine, I just haven't had much of an appetite lately," she replied.

"I will not let this monster do this to you. He will not take you from me. Let me be your strength angel, for I will fight for you until there is no longer breath in my body. You are my wife. You are the mother of my children and this bastard will not destroy this family," Anakin said passionately. The dam broke and Padme's tears flowed.

"Oh Ani!" she cried, as she buried her face on his shoulder.

"I'm so frightened...I'm afraid to even leave our apartment. He...can see me out there," Padme cried. Anakin rocked her gently.

"You don't have to worry. I'm going to be by your side the entire day," Anakin replied.

"I know...but you shouldn't have to be. You have other duties that you should be attending to," Padme replied.

"There is nothing that is more important to me than you and our family Padme," Anakin replied.

Palo slipped into his secret room behind his bookcase in his office. He raised the lights and switched on the small holocom. The holographic image of Lady Jamilla appeared.

"Greetings, milady," Palo said.

"Good morning Palo. General Tarkin has asked me to get a progress report," Jamilla replied.

"I am sending you a file of things of interest that I have acquired from the Chancellor," Palo said. A few minutes later, Jamilla was scanning the file.

"Very interesting...very interesting indeed. You have done well Palo. This information is invaluable. You have basically handed us the

workings of the entire Republic," Jamilla said.

"Yes, including all the security layouts in and around the Senate building. I think my work deserves to be rewarded," Palo replied.

"And what do you want?" Jamilla asked.

"You know very well what I want. I have her scared to death and I think it is the ideal time for me to take what is mine," Palo said.

"You must have patience. The time is not right yet. Master Dooku says that for now, you are to keep yourself anonymous and only scare her. If the Chosen One is distracted by one of our agents, you may do what you want to her, as long as your identity is not revealed. The time is not right for that to be revealed yet," Jamilla replied.

"I have held up my end of the bargain and now it is time for the Sith to as well. I want the Senator," Palo demanded.

"You will follow orders or you will be replaced," a dark voice rumbled. Palo backed down, as Darth Severus appeared.

"Of course master," Palo replied.

"The Chosen One is not an easy opponent to kill, but I assure you, it will happen. And when it does, you may take the Senator for your own. But you will not do it before we tell you to," Severus said.

"Of course master, I understand," Palo replied.

"See that you continue your work," Severus said, as the transmission blinked out. Palo stared longingly at one of his paintings he'd done of the beautiful Senator.

"Soon, my sweet rose...soon," he said.

Shaak Ti and Bultar Swan stepped inside the abandoned warehouse in the lower levels of Coruscant. They had received a tip that a wanted criminal was making the old warehouse his hideout and they had been sent to investigate.

"There is a very dark presence here," Bultar said.

"I feel it too. Bultar, look!" Shaak Ti said, as they spotted the body of a dead, mangled Dug on the floor in a pool of his own purple blood.

"He was beaten to death...most brutally," Bultar mentioned.

"He is our criminal. It looks as though someone has gotten to him before us," Shaak replied.

"Or perhaps...he was just the bait to lure us here. The dark presence is getting stronger," Bultar said slowly.

"Very perceptive, you pathetic Knight," a cruel, female voice snarled.

"Who are you?" Shaak Ti demanded, as she and Bultar turned to face the person. The woman dropped the hood on her cloak and shed it completely. She had long, jet black hair and eyes, as well as a small, slight figure. The woman's appearance suggested that she was of the same human race as Bultar, as both had similar traits.

"Suun Crane..." Bultar said, not believing her eyes.

"You know her Bultar?" Shaak asked.

"We grew up together in the Temple. We learned and studied the ancient arts together," Bultar said.

"Yes...and then you were chosen by a master and I was shipped off to Agri-Corps like yesterday's trash. I hated that prison, so I escaped one day and eventually found my way to Master Tyrannus. He gave me purpose and put my training to use, promising me vengeance and revenge on those that had wronged me. Suun Crane no longer exists...I am Darth Zana," the Sith replied.

Darth Zana drew her crimson saber, twirling it expertly.

"Please Suun...things don't have to be like this. The Sith will only lead you down a path of destruction. You are very talented. You can use your abilities for good...don't do this," Bultar pleaded.

"I told you...Suun Crane is dead. I am Darth Zana...one of the most powerful Sith Lords in the galaxy. Your pathetic, grand Republic will fall and the destruction will begin...with you," Zana said. Shaak Ti ignited her yellow blade and Bultar Swan ignited her emerald blade. The three female fighters launched into battle...

Holonet cameras were swarming around the Senate building, more than usual this morning. The Jedi Council had arrived to deliver a motion requesting that they be allowed to resume prospecting for Force sensitive infants. As Anakin and Padme approached, the Holonet reporters began firing their questions.

"Senator, the Jedi Council is going to great lengths to lift the ban on the law that allows them to take Force sensitive children from their parents. How do you respond to this?"

"What do you plan to do if they are successful and try to take custody of your own children?

"Knight Skywalker, you have killed two Sith Lords in the past few weeks. Just how many more do you believe are out there?"

"Knight Skywalker, is it true that there is an unknown, dangerous man stalking your wife?"

Anakin and Padme remained silent, as they pushed their way through the crowd and into the building. Padme's head was already aching and she felt a little faint. But she pushed back the nausea and dizziness, not wanting to worry Anakin. He would take her straight home if he knew and she had to be present at this session. The lives of so many were resting on her shoulders.

Darth Zana was extremely skilled and kept her opponents shadowboxing. Her energetic style of saber technique was an ancient art form that only Bultar was familiar with Shaak Ti found herself outmatched and wasn't surprised when Zana landed a hard kick in her chest. The wind was knocked out of her and she was sent flying against the far wall. Zana circled Bultar and then extinguished her saber.

"You and I are among the few that still practice the ancient fighting arts. It's been a very long time since anyone has been able to stand up to me in hand to hand combat. Extinguish your saber and let's see who is the better fighter," Zana said.

"I am a master in all forms of the ancient arts," Bultar replied. Zana laughed.

"I'm not just a master in all forms. I'm *the* master," Zana replied arrogantly.

"We shall see," Bultar said, as she fell into fighting stance.

"Yes, we shall," Zana replied, as she too fell into fighting stance. The two females stared each other down for a few moments, before finally launching at each other, each with a fierce battle cry. Shaak Ti found herself watching in amazement. Kicks, punches, and blocks flew furiously. The speed and energy so intense that Shaak Ti had trouble following them...

The debate was long and heated, as Master Kuro, Master Jill, and Master Windu argued in favor of re-instating the law allowing them to admit all children with high midi-chlorian counts to their creche.

"The Jedi have been a part of the Republic for thousands of years, yet we have been cast aside in favor of this new order. The Republic has take away most of our funding and resources just because we continue to hold tradition and our code in high honor. Our numbers

are at an all time low and we cannot properly protect the Republic in our current state. We need to increase our numbers if we are to combat the evils that face our Republic," Kuro argued.

"Your numbers have dwindled, because you have refused to change. Your principals no longer suite our changing and flourishing government. The Knights of the Galactic Republic have taken the mantle of protecting our good Republic where your stagnant order has failed. Taking children from unwilling parents are not values this Republic wishes to promote," Padme argued in return.

"Chancellor, I motion that you revoke Senator Amidala-Skywalker's participation in this debate," Master Jill requested.

"Motion denied," Chancellor Organa responded.

"Chancellor, she is much too close to this issue," Kuro argued.

"Many of us are close to this issue. Many of us have children of our own, or nieces and nephews. As a majority, we have agreed that we prefer the KGR's handling of children. Their younglings have been given to them voluntarily by parents who cannot care for them or give them a good life. And those parents are still allowed visitation, if they so choose. Frankly, my constituents and I are tired of mulling over an issue which we do not desire to change back to the old way of things. We will vote now on your petition and this will be the final time it is discussed. We have wasted hours on this issue and there are many other important things for us to debate," Bail said. Votes were cast and the results came back quickly.

"The petition submitted by the Jedi Council has been defeated by a majority vote of eighty percent against the petition and twenty percent in favor of the petition," Palo read for the Chancellor.

"Your petition has not passed. The Senate's stance remains on this issue. I implore the Jedi Council to strongly consider change if you want to save what is left of your order. But as you operate now, the Senate cannot offer it's support. Our support must be placed with the

KGR, as they are best equipped to defend this Republic. Palo, please bring forth the next issue for debate," Bail said formally. Palo nodded and began to read the next issue on the agenda.

Zana and Bultar battled furiously, completely relying on their combat skills.

"You have studied the arts well," Zana said.

"So have you," Bultar replied, as she blocked a high punch and whipped around, trying to land a side kick in her abdomen. Zana caught her foot and pushed her back. Bultar flipped head over heals and quickly looked back. She blocked Zana's roundhouse kick, but the Sith landed a hard axe kick on her back. The kick knocked her flat on her stomach and Bultar had to roll away from another stomping kick. Bultar jumped up and placed her hands up in defensive stance.

"There is no longer any honor in the way you fight. To attack one from the back is to dishonor yourself," Bultar said.

"You don't get it Bultar. I care nothing for honor. I am a Sith and I go for the kill," Zana replied, as she launched into a spectacular spiral kick. Bultar screamed, as the Sith landed the kick in her chest and threw her against a metal pole. Bultar fell unconscious and Shaak Ti ran to her.

"Bultar!" Shaak Ti said, as she tried to shake her friend awake. She noticed a little blood on her comrade's lips and knew she needed to get her to Bant.

"I will spar you both today, since I'm sure you will deliver my message to the Chosen One. He shall meet me in battle soon and he will meet his end at my hands," Zana said, as she stepped into the shadows and was gone. Shaak Ti lifted Bultar into her arms and hurried to her speeder.

The Senate session droned on as usual and Padme was following along on her datapad. Every once in a while, her eyes would find Anakin, who was up in the balcony, watching security. They would give each other a small smile, before she would turn back to her datapad. As she pressed the page button on her datapad to bring up some new text, a message popped up. Her hands began to shake, as she silently read the message.

Congratulations on your victory, my rose. You look relieved now that they can never take your children away. They should be my children you know. You're supposed to be with me...and you will be...very soon. I've been watching you all day, my beautiful rose and I find myself aching to touch you. I see him too. He's looking for me...but he won't find me. He's going to die soon...and then you'll be with me. Until then, I will watch you and dream about you...

Padme's head was swimming and she felt dizzy. Her breathing was ragged and her skin was covered in a sheen of sweat. Tears welled in her eyes, as she searched the thousands of faces around her, knowing he could be anywhere. She felt her vision begin to go dark and she uttered her husband's name, as she fainted.

"Anakin," it came out as a whisper, but he had already bounded over the railing and was using the Force to carry himself to her pod. Luckily, Dorme had been in her pod with her and prevented her from falling. Anakin swept her into his arms and Dorme maneuvered the pod to it's docking ring. Anakin carried her out and ran out of the building, heading for the KGR headquarters. Bant and Barriss would be able to help her. The Senate had erupted in an awful commotion and Bail dismissed for the day.

"Palo, we must speak to the press. Prepare a quick statement for me. Then we will go see how Padme is doing," Bail said.

"At once sir. I do hope she is all right. I can't think of what could have caused such an episode," Palo replied. Bail nodded, as they went to work.

Anakin stormed into the med bay at the KGR headquarters.

"Anakin? Oh my, what has happened?" Barriss asked, as she motioned for him to lay Padme down.

"She was in the Senate and I think another message...from him came over her datapad. She just fainted. Please tell me she's okay," Anakin said, as he caught his breath. Barriss began running a scan over her, while one of her aides pressed a cold compress to the young woman's forehead. Anakin glanced over at Bant, who tending to Bultar. Shaak Ti and Obi-Wan stood there conversing quietly.

"What happened to Bultar?" Anakin asked.

"Bultar and I went to investigate the abandoned warehouse in the lower levels this morning. We were ambushed by a Sith," Shaak Ti replied.

"Was it Severus?" Anakin asked.

"No, she called herself Darth Zana. Bultar said that she used to be Suun Crane and they grew up together in the temple. But Suun was sent to Agri-Corps and apparently over the years, she somehow found her way to Dooku. She is an expert in the ancient fighting arts, just like Bultar. But unlike Bultar, she did not fight fairly," Shaak Ti said.

"Bant, is she going to be all right?" Obi-Wan asked.

"The last kick Zana got in punctured a lung, but we have mended it. She will be sore for a few days, but she will make a full recovery," Bant reported. The three Knights sighed in relief.

"Barriss, what happened? Is Padme okay?" Anakin asked.

"Her breathing and heart rate are normal now. She likely experienced an anxiety attack caused by whatever was in that

message. The stress and anxiety has built up over the last few weeks on her. Has she been eating properly?" Barriss asked.

"I've practically had to force feed her. She just picks at her food. I got her to eat some Shuura fruit this morning, but she had to practically choke it down and she loves Shuura fruit," Anakin said.

"Well, lack of appetite is common in cases of high stress and anxiety. She was probably experiencing nausea and dizziness before this. Then, we she received that message, she began to panic. Her heart rate and breathing shot way up and caused her to faint. She's not going to like it Anakin, but I'm going to have to place her on leave from the Senate for a month at least," Barriss said.

"Fine with me. She's overworking herself as it is," Anakin replied.

"I want her to get lots of rest and relaxation. Hopefully, we can reprimand this stalker soon and relieve her of this anxiety. But until then, I want her to refrain from work at the Senate, which will only pile on more stress," Barriss said. Anakin nodded, as Dorme stepped in.

"Is she going to be all right?" Dorme asked.

"She's going to be fine. She had an anxiety attack," Anakin replied.

"No wonder. I think you probably need to see this," Dorme said, as she handed the datapad to Anakin.

"Thanks Dorme. Can you please see if you can begin finding someone to fill Padme's post temporarily. She will be on leave for at least a month and I know she would prefer someone other than Jar Jar," Anakin replied.

"Of course Anakin. I'll contact the palace on Naboo and inform them of the situation. I will also ask that they keep the situation discreet," Dorme replied.

"Thank you Dorme," Anakin said, as he turned to read the datapad. His blood boiled, as he read it, before handing it to Obi-Wan. Obi-Wan sighed deeply, as he read it, slowly stroking his beard. Padme began to stir and Anakin brushed her hair away from her face.

"Anakin?" she asked.

"Shh...I'm here angel. Just lie still," he soothed.

"Where...am I? What happened?" she asked.

"You had an anxiety attack and you fainted," Anakin explained. Padme looked horrified, remembering the message that had brought on the attack. Barriss stepped to her, checking her temperature for the last time. She found it normal this time and prepared to tell Padme that she was placing her on leave.

Padme had took the news of leave well enough and Barriss allowed Anakin to take her home. She couldn't think of anything she'd rather do anyway than spend the evening curled up in her husband's arms with her wonderful children. Her family made everything else melt away, even if it was for a short time and she had never needed them as desperately as she needed them now...

Pulling Together

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars

AN: Here's chapter 13! Thanks for the great reviews. You guys are awesome!

Never Gone II

Chapter 13: Pulling Together

The six members of the Jedi Council sat in the once grand Council room. Master Windu, Master Jill, Master Kuro, Master Nu, Master Mundi, and Master Yoda discussed the Senate meeting.

"This is outrageous! Our order is dying and they act like it's for the best. Does this new Republic hold nothing sacred anymore?" Pablo Jill asked angrily.

"Senator Amidala-Skywalker has destroyed our order. She's getting what she deserves, as far as I'm concerned," Kuro growled, making no intention to hide her intense dislike for the Senator.

"Deserve what is happening to her, the Senator does not. A kind woman she is. Only desires to protect her younglings, she does. Once a great ally she was toe the order. Destroyed that we did when we attempted to take her children. A powerful thing love and devotion can be. Watched it work in Anakin and Padme's lives I have. Time it is, perhaps, that we let the old ways die and new ideas blossom in our dying order," Yoda said.

"Master Yoda, you cannot be serious! You are the last person I'd expect to let tradition die. Love is a fleeting, unreliable, and dangerous emotion," Jocasta Nu protested.

"At the risk of sounding hypocritical, I must agree with Master Nu. Were it not required for me to procreate to populate my planet, I

would have never married," Ki-Adi Mundi said.

"Your situation is completely different, Master Mundi. You have done your duty to your people and kept yourself unattached. The new order allows these romantic attachments to cloud their lives and get in the way of their duty to the Republic," Kuro said.

"Love is a weakness Master Yoda. I understand why Senator Amidala-Skywalker has fought to keep her children, but I must agree with the rest," Mace replied.

"A weakness, love can be. But the greatest strength it can be as well. Without love, defeated the Sith, Anakin would not have. Defeat the remaining Sith he will, as long as he fights with love in his heart. Possess all the weapons we have, the Sith do and many more that we don't. Except the one Anakin and Padme have mastered and that is love. Taught Anakin many things, Obi-Wan has, but learned the power of love from his padawan, he did. To think that our ways are the only way, is to be arrogant. Change we must, evolve like our comrades have, to survive we must. Meditated on this long and hard I have and the will of the Force it is that we need change," Yoda said.

"I don't believe what I'm hearing," Kuro said in disgust.

"I'm afraid I don't agree master. The old ways are sacred and should be sustained as such," Master Jill said. Yoda hopped out of his seat and began to hobble to the exit.

"Where are you going?" Mace asked.

"To visit the Skywalker family. Responsible for some of the anxiety on the Senator's shoulders, we are. Compounded the stress and worry, we did by causing her to fear losing her younglings. Going through much more she is and could have done without our making it worse," Yoda said, as he left slowly.

Anakin watched her brush out her curls. She'd taken a hot bath to help her relax and had just dressed in a comfortable, flowing light blue dress. Lea and Obi-Wan were over watching the twins and making dinner. Padme stood up from her vanity and stepped into her husband's arms. He wrapped her tightly in his embrace, as she rested her head against his firm chest.

"I love you and I promise everything's going to be okay," Anakin said, as he tilted her chin up and kissed her tenderly. She managed a small smile, before he wrapped his arm around her waist and led her to their bedroom door.

"Come on, Lea's making your favorite. And I'm going to make sure you eat every bite," he told her. She smiled and kissed his cheek.

"I'm actually hungry," she replied.

"Good, that's a good sign," Anakin replied.

As they stepped out of their bedroom, the door indicator chimed. Threepio shuffled to answer it and the twins bounded into the living area from their rooms to see who it was.

Threepio answered the door and was pleasantly surprised to see Master Yoda on the other end.

"Dad, it's Master Yoda!" Luke called. Yoda chuckled as the rambunctious twins hugged him greeting.

"Greetings Luke and Leia," the old master said. Anakin and Padme came to greet him.

"Hello Master Yoda, to what do we owe this pleasure?" Anakin asked.

"Came to see how you were feeling, Senator," Yoda replied.

"That's very kind of you Master Yoda. I'm doing all right. All little tired and a bit weak, but Anakin is taking very good care of me," Padme

replied, as she smiled at her husband.

"No doubt I had that he would," Yoda said.

"Will you come in and sit down, master?" Anakin offered.

"Thank you Anakin," Yoda said, as he hobbled in and sat down. Obi-Wan came out of the kitchen, having heard Master Yoda's voice.

"Master Yoda, this is a pleasant surprise," Obi-Wan said.

"Hello Obi-Wan, came by to see how Padme was doing, I did," Yoda replied.

"Would you like to join us for dinner, master? Lea is a wonderful cook and she has made plenty," Obi-Wan said.

"Wouldn't want to intrude, I would," Yoda replied.

"Oh please Master, it wouldn't be any trouble at all. We'd all love it if you'd stay," Padme insisted.

"Please stay Master Yoda," Leia said pleaded.

"Able to resist such a face, I am not," Yoda replied, referring to Leia's pout.

"That pout gets me every time too," Anakin said, with a smile.

"Good, I'd better get back to helping Lea," Obi-Wan said. Anakin looked at him slyly.

"Are you really helping or are you getting in the way?" Anakin asked.

"I'll have you know Anakin, that I know my way around the kitchen as well," Obi-Wan replied. Lea came out with a stack of plates in her hands.

"You would be correct Anakin. He is getting in the way, as usual," she said, as she pecked him affectionately on the cheek and handed him the plates.

"Set the table darling," she said, as she returned to the kitchen. Anakin covered a laugh with a suspicious cough, as Obi-Wan eyed him. Yoda chuckled too, before continuing.

"Wanted to apologize to you both, I did," Yoda said.

"For what, master?" Anakin asked.

"For my constituents pursuing the fight to take your younglings. Know that I protested this and wrong I have been in the past for not supporting change. Anakin, discuss this further with you and Obi-Wan I wish to after our meal. Leaving, the Jedi Order I am," Yoda announced. Anakin and Padme looked shocked, but then they both smiled at each other.

"Master, you're welcome to join us at the KGR. We would gladly welcome your wisdom," Anakin said.

"Thank you Anakin. Saddened I am, that I could not convince the others, but making the right decision I am," Yoda replied. They heard Lea call them for dinner and they retired to the dining room to enjoy dinner together with their special guest. After a nice, quiet dinner together, they received a call from Naboo. Padme and Lea were talking to Padme's worried family, who had heard about her collapse at the Senate earlier that day. The twins and Jeena were playing in Leia's room. Obi-Wan, Anakin and Yoda sat on the veranda discussing various things and bringing Master Yoda up to date on everything that had happened since the Sith had re-emerged.

"No leads you have on this person stalking your wife?" Yoda asked. Anakin sighed in frustration.

"Not anything substantial," Anakin replied. Yoda sat thoughtfully for a moment.

"A very likely scenario, the one your wife suggested Obi-Wan," Yoda said.

"Anakin and I agree master. We just don't understand how this person could possibly be helping the Sith if they have no Force abilities.

"Share a common interest, they may," Yoda said.

"What do you mean, master?" Anakin asked.

"A powerful Sith Lord, Dooku is and powerful his apprentices are. Stand in the way of the Sith's desire to rule the galaxy, you do. Stand in the way of this man who is after Padme as well," Yoda said.

"Of course. They've got someone on the inside, probably feeding them all kinds of information. In exchange for performing whatever tasks they ask of him, the Sith reward him by giving him Padme upon your death against the Sith," Obi-Wan said.

"Your insight serves you well, Obi-Wan," Yoda said.

"But that still doesn't tell us who it could possibly be," Anakin replied.

"No, that still remains a mystery. This man has the Sith covering his tracks for him, therefore he will not be easy to unmask," Obi-Wan replied.

"Well, we have more information than we started with. Thank you master," Anakin said gratefully.

"A fresh perspective helps at times," Yoda advised.

"Oh Padme, we saw you collapse on the Holonet. What in heaven's name is going on?" Jobal asked frantically.

"I'm fine mother," Padme replied.

"You didn't look fine. We're concerned sweetheart," Ruwee said.

"I just...got another message...from him during the Senate meeting. Healer Offee said I had an anxiety attack and fainted. I'm fine and I'm on leave from the Senate for a while. I assure you that Anakin, Lea and Obi-Wan aren't letting me lift a finger. They're taking good care of me," Padme replied.

"I know they are sweetheart. Oh, when will you leave that life?" Jobal fretted.

"Someday I will mom, but it will be on my own accord. Not because someone has forced me to," Padme replied. Jobal sighed in defeat.

"Your mother is just worried about you honey. We all are," Ruwee replied.

"I know dad, but I'll be okay. Ani's taking good care of me and I know that he and Obi-Wan will find...this person and put them in prison where they belong," Padme replied.

"Are the children in bed yet?" Jobal asked. Lea smiled.

"No, they're in Leia's room playing. I'll bring them to say hi," Lea replied.

Later that night, Obi-Wan and Lea gathered up their sleepy daughter and prepared to leave for their own apartment down the hall. They had offered Master Yoda their guest bedroom and he kindly accepted. They soon left and Anakin shut the door.

"All right you two, it's getting late. Go brush your teeth and get ready for bed. Mommy and daddy will be in to tuck you in," Padme said. The twins scampered off to their rooms and to the fresher, chattering with each other as usual. Padme leaned back against her husband's shoulder, as he wrapped his arms around her from behind.

"You feeling okay, angel?" he asked.

"I'm always fine when I'm in your arms," she replied. She turned her head so their lips could meet in a soft, loving kiss

"Let's put the twins to bed and then we can have some quiet time together," she said, as she turned in his embrace and kissed him passionately

"Sounds perfect," he replied, as they walked toward the twins' room, arms around each other's waists. After tucking them twins in and kissing them goodnight, Padme went to the bedroom to get ready for bed and Anakin went to the kitchen to fetch a bottle of wine from the cooler and two glasses. When he entered the bedroom, Padme was still in the fresher. The door slid closed behind him and he undressed, donning his usual black sleep pants. He carefully lit a few candles and poured the wine, while waiting for his beautiful wife. She stepped out and awed him, as she always did. She was dressed in a short, red negligee that left nothing to his imagination. Her shapely legs were in full view and the neckline revealed a tantalizing amount of her cleavage.

"Gods, you are so beautiful," Anakin said, as she sauntered toward him. He handed her a glass and they sipped together.

"Come here," he said, as he sat his glass down and sat down on the bed. He led her to sit down in front of him.

"What are you doing?" she asked playfully.

"I am going to massage these beautiful, but very tense shoulders of yours," Anakin said. He slipped the thin straps off her shoulders, leaving them dangling off to the side. He moved his strong hands in massaging circles along the back of her neck, upper back and shoulders.

"Ooohhhh...Ani, this feels...amazing..." Padme said. His hands traveled up and down her back, massaging her aching muscles in a

sensual rhythm.

"Mmmm...that feels so good. How do you always know exactly what I need?" she asked. He kissed her bare shoulder softly and then craned his neck around, as she turned her head bringing their faces only centimeters apart. Padme felt her heart begin to pound in her chest, as he looked at her with that all encompassing gaze that he held only for her. It was as feral and passionate as it was loving and gentle. All the overwhelming, wonderful emotions he felt for her just in that one gaze.

"How do I know? It's simple really. I know, because you're the other half of my soul. There is no me without you; I couldn't exist. If something happened to you or if someone took you away from me, my heart would be shattered into so many pieces that they wouldn't be able to find them all. That's how I know angel. And that's why I will protect you and our children with every ounce of my strength, every drop of my blood, and every breath in my body," he confessed passionately.

"I love you so much. You and our twins are my life...and that's why I'm so frightened...because someone is trying to take me away from you," she said, as tears welled in her eyes. He shushed her and kissed her lips softly.

"He...wants things from me that I've only ever given to you. He wants me...but I belong to you," Padme replied, as she clung to him.

"Of course, just like I belong to you. We're two halves of one soul angel and we'll be together forever. And Force help this man who lusts after you, for if he touches you or harms you, there will be no where he can hide from me," Anakin said fiercely. Padme crushed her lips against his in a searing kiss. Anakin tilted his head, slanting his lips over hers, kissing her passionately and deeply. As his lips moved to her neck, she tilted her head. She closed her eyes and threw her head back, as he breathed fire on her throat. She felt that familiar feeling begin to build with hot intensity in her core. He moved to her collarbone, gently nipping and sucking at her sweet flesh.

Using the Force, Anakin extinguished the candles. The bed caught them, as passion's spell took them and ignited their love, joining them as one...

"Chancellor, why did Senator Amidala faint?" one reporter asked.

"Senator Amidala suffered an anxiety attack this afternoon caused by the tremendous amount of stress she has been under as of late. This compounded with the recent death of the Queen of Naboo and two of her handmaidens, all which were good friend's of the Senator, caused the unfortunate attack. However, Senator Amidala's husband has informed me that she is doing well," Bail replied.

"Chancellor, the rumor is that the Senator has been receiving anonymous messages from the person that is stalking her and that this triggered the attack," another reporter shouted.

"That situation is being handled by the proper authorities and I'm not at liberty to comment," Bail said, sidestepping the question.

"Do the KGR have any leads as to whom this stalker is?" another reporter shouted.

"Not at this time," Bail answered politely.

"Is it true that this person may be connected to the Sith?" another reporter shouted.

"That information is strictly classified. Senator Amidala is doing well and is currently on leave. Thank you," Bail said, concluding the press conference.

"Chancellor, I spoke to the Senator's cousin and she said that it would be all right for us to stop by tomorrow morning. Your schedule is clear from ten to noon, so I scheduled a visit at ten," Palo informed him.

"That's fine Palo," Bail replied, with a smile.

"I do hope that Senator Amidala is okay," Palo said.

"Don't worry Palo, she has very good care with Anakin. I will see you in the morning," Bail said, as he headed toward the exit with his security entourage escorting him. Palo glared, at the mention of *his* name and quickly went to his office. He shut the door and slipped into his secret room.

"You're supposed to be mine. Everyone keeps talking about how great *he* is and how wonderful *he* is to you. I HATE him!" Palo screamed, as picked up a vase and hurled it at the wall, shattering it into pieces.

"You're mine Padme. He thinks he can keep you away from me...but he won't. I'll make you mine...very soon..." Palo vowed, as he pulled out his datapad and began looking over the Holonet's most recent clips of Padme. He'd lived off her Holonet images for years...but they were becoming more and more unsatisfying. He wouldn't be satisfied until she belonged to him...

Kissing Away the Nightmares

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars.

AN: Here's chapter 14! Thanks for all the great reviews. Enjoy!

Never Gone II

Chapter 14: Kissing Away the Nightmares

The remaining five members of the Jedi Council sat in their seats. Eyes drifted to the vacant seat in which master Yoda had sat in for centuries on the once great Council.

"I cannot believe this," Pablo Jill uttered.

"Master Yoda is the last one I would expect betrayal from!" Kuro spat.

"This is the most unfortunate loss we could have suffered," Mace said.

"What do we do now? Without Master Yoda, the Senate will stop hearing us completely," Ki-Adi Mundi said.

"We still proceed with trying to find the Sith ourselves. The KGR is no closer to finding their location than we are," Mace said.

"Do you wish for us to still leave for the outer rim?" Pablo Jill asked.

"Yes, you and master Kuro will head for Korriban. While it's evident that Dooku's hideout is not there, it is likely that he visits there often to consult the Sith holocrons and artifacts," Mace said.

"We shall leave at once," Kuro replied. Mace nodded and dismissed the other four Jedi. Mace sat silently in the empty Council room, still staring at Master Yoda's empty seat. For the first time in a very long

time, he felt lost. And for the first time in his life, he found himself actually questioning the Code. If Master Yoda would abandon it, then perhaps there were some things he needed to consider...

Padme's breathing came in ragged gasps, as she desperately searched her surroundings. But blackness met her vision, as she was again blindfolded. She tried to move her arms, but they were shackled above her head and the soft surface underneath her led her to believe that she was on a bed. She tried to scream, as she felt his lips kissing down her neck. And those lips that were kissing her and those hands that were touching her were NOT Anakin's. The gag stuffed between her teeth kept her screams muffled. She whimpered desperately, as the hands began tugging at her dress. She called out to Anakin through the Force like he had taught her...but she was met with nothing.

" *He's dead," the mechanical, garbled voice stated. Panic and fear swept through her at those words. No...her Ani couldn't be gone.*

" *Anakin!!!!!" she cried out in her mind, but nothing came in response. She sobbed, as the man undressed her completely and she could feel his heated gaze on her exposed body.*

" *I've been waiting for this for so long. You're finally mine," the sick man said, as she felt his hands begin to fondle her breasts. As his lips and hands touched places only her beloved husband had touched, she sobbed almost uncontrollably. The man grew frustrated and she felt a hard slap across her cheek.*

" *I've tried to be patient and gentle with you, but you don't appreciate it. I've waited so long for this...and you're finally going to be mine," the man said harshly, as he forced her legs apart.*

" *You're mine now Padme," the man said. Padme screamed, as he forcefully shoved himself inside her. Padme cried uncontrollably, as the man violently raped her.*

" *He's dead...he can't save you! You belong to me now!" he screamed.*

" *Noooo!!!!!" she screamed...but no one could hear her...*

"No...oh please no! Anakin...Anakin...oh Ani...help me...please!" Padme tossed and turned. Anakin shook his wife's fear stricken body, as she trembled and flailed wildly.

"Padme...wake up. Come on angel, wake up. It's just a nightmare angel," Anakin comforted. His voice finally broke through to her and she awoke with a start. Anakin caught her, as she threw herself in his arms and sobbed against his chest.

"Shh...it was just a nightmare. I'm here angel," he comforted.

"Oh Ani...please don't leave me," she sobbed.

"Padme, you're my life. I could never leave you," he assured her.

"But in my dream...he was there and he said you were dead," Padme sobbed.

"It was only a nightmare, angel," he assured her.

"He...he was raping me. It was horrible!" she cried. Anakin held her tightly and rocked her gently in his arms.

"Shh...everything's all right angel. I'm here and I'm not going anywhere," Anakin promised. She started to calm down and finally looked up at him.

"I'm sorry...it was just so real. I couldn't see or speak. And I couldn't even fight back...just like when he had me in the palace," Padme said, as she wiped her tears away and grabbed a tissue from the bedside table.

"You have nothing to be sorry about. I'll find this coward and stop him Padme. I love you and I'm always going to be here for you," he replied.

"I love you...so much," she said, clinging to him, as if he was going to disappear.

"And I love you, my angel," he replied, as he kissed her passionately, before they laid back down together. Anakin spooned her against him.

"Just relax angel and go back to sleep. I'll always be here to kiss away your nightmares," he comforted. Padme thought going back to sleep would be impossible. But as she lay thoroughly wrapped in her husband's arms, she slowly became drowsy again. The feel of his warm breath on her bare shoulder and the feel of his soft lips caressing her hair, her cheek and her neck, slowly lulled her to sleep in the safe security of her husband's strong arms.

The next morning, Padme donned her robe and went about making breakfast for her family. Anakin came in the kitchen and wrapped his arms around her from behind.

"You aren't supposed to be doing anything," he said, as he kissed her cheek.

"Making breakfast for my family is hardly stressful, my love," she replied, as she stepped to the doorway.

"Luke, Leia, come eat breakfast," she called. The twins came bounding into the kitchen, dressed and ready for school. The twins threw their little arms around their mother. Padme knelt down and hugged them both.

"You're both all ready for school," Padme said in surprise.

"Threepio helped us get ready for you mommy," Leia said. Padme smiled and glanced at her husband.

"That was wonderful of him," Padme said, as she and Anakin scooted the twins into their chairs. Padme pecked her husband on the lips.

"You are wonderful too, you know," Padme said.

"Anything for you," Anakin replied.

"Well, I think I'll have to make it up to you after the twins go to school," she whispered.

"Did you sleep well the last half of the night?" Anakin asked.

"I did," she replied.

"No more dreams?" he asked.

"Well, I did dream, but it wasn't bad. In fact, it was very good. Remember, you have the power to kiss away my nightmares," she replied, as she wrapped her arms around his neck.

"What was it about?" he asked.

"Well, I won't go into too much detail right here...but it involved you and no clothing. I would be willing, however, to discuss it in great detail later and we can reenact the dream," Padme whispered to him. Anakin smirked and was about to lean down and kiss her when the twins interrupted.

"Mommy, aren't you and daddy going to eat with us?" Leia asked impatiently. Padme smiled and kissed his cheek.

"To be continued later," she said, as she sat down.

"Of course we are sweetie," Padme said, as Anakin sat down next to her. After eating breakfast together, Anakin and Padme kissed the

twins goodbye, as Dorme and Captain Typho shuttled them off to school, promising to pick them up together that afternoon.

"We should get cleaned up if the Chancellor is coming to visit," Anakin said. She nodded, as they headed for the bedroom.

"So, do you want the shower first?" he asked. She smiled and took his hand, leading him into the fresher.

"I want you in the shower with me," she replied, as the fresher door slid closed...

Threepio answered the door, as its indicator chime.

"Greetings Chancellor Organa, Mr. Palo," Threepio greeted.

"Hello Threepio. I trust that Padme is well enough to have some company?" Bail asked.

"Miss Padme is doing quite well considering the terrible ordeal she experienced yesterday. Master Ani and I are taking very good care of her if I do say so myself," Threepio said, as he led them to the sitting room. Bail chuckled.

"That is very good to hear," Bail said, as he and Palo sat down. A few moments later, Anakin and Padme entered arm in arm. Bail and Palo stood up to formally greet her.

"Padme, it does my heart good to see that you are well," Bail said, as he bowed to her. Palo bowed as well.

"Me too milady. We've all been terribly worried about you," Palo replied

"I'm sorry to worry you. I assure you that I am fine though. Anakin has been taking excellent care of me," Padme said, as she smiled at him. They sat down together and Threepio served hot cups of caf.

"We will miss your presence in the Senate, but I believe it is wise for you to take leave until this perpetrator can be caught," Bail said.

"And I will catch him and lock him up where he belongs. If he touches her again, they'll be no where he can hide, not even behind Dooku himself," Anakin said. Palo carefully hid the nervous glared he held for Padme's husband. He only hope the Sith would be able to hold up their end of the bargain and eliminate Skywalker. In order for him to claim Padme for his own, Anakin Skywalker had to die. Conversation continued for a short time, before Bail and Palo rose to leave.

"Well, unfortunately milady, I have many other meetings to tend to today," Bail said regretfully.

"Of course Bail. Thank you for coming by," Padme replied.

"Anything for friends. In fact, tomorrow evening, Breha and I would love if both of you and your children would join us for dinner at our residence. Invite Master Kenobi's family as well," Bail said.

"Thank you Bail, we'd be honored to come," Padme replied.

"Good, then I will see you both tomorrow evening," Bail said, as he bid them goodbye. Anakin and Padme saw them both out.

Darth Malina sparred furiously with Darth Zana in the training room. The two stopped and bowed, as Dooku entered.

"You are ready to face the Chosen Once, Darth Zana," Dooku announced.

"Thank you my master, I will not disappoint you," Zana replied.

"See that you don't. You will leave for Coruscant at once and engage the Chosen One when an opportune time presents itself. You will be our third attempt to kill him. Do not fail," Dooku said.

"Yes master," Zana replied, as she left to prepare for her voyage back to Coruscant.

"Do you really think she will succeed Master?" Malina asked.

"She relies on her abilities in the ancient arts more than she relies on the Force. That could work for or against her. If she can use her brutal combat skills to beat the Chosen One to a bloody pulp, then his vast reservoir of power will not help him," Dooku replied.

"And if she fails?" Malina asked.

"Our plans remained unchanged. If she fails, the Chosen One will not likely escape without needed a treatment in the bacta tank. Then Severus will step in and if he too is unsuccessful, then you shall get your chance at him," Dooku replied.

"Thank you master," she replied, silently hoping for failure from her fellow Sith, just so she could be the one to eliminate the mighty Chosen One...

Anakin and Padme had lunch together in a small, quiet café, before they visited some of the intergalactic market places in the vicinity around Luke and Leia's school. When the time came, they met their children at the usual spot and headed off to a nearby park. They decided it would be nice just to be together as a family and let the twins play in the park. Anakin and Padme sat contentedly on a bench near a fountain, as the twins played with some other kids In the near distance. Padme sat comfortable nestle in her husband's arms, staring off into space.

"Credit for your thoughts?" he asked. She snapped out of her daze and looked up at him with a smile.

"Just thinking about how much I love you and our children and how lucky we are to be together," Padme replied.

"We've been through a lot and we'll get through whatever else is thrown at us," he promised, as he kissed her cheek.

"We should probably head home," Padme said.

"Yeah, I guess it's getting late," Anakin replied, as he looked up to see the twins.

"Luke! Leia!" Anakin called, waving them over. The twins dashed toward their parents and they headed to their family speeder.

Anakin parked the speeder at home and the twins hopped out. The whole Skywalker family was met with a surprise upon entering. Lea, Obi-Wan and Jeena were there of course, but standing next to them were Sola and Beru.

"Aunt Sola! Aunt Beru!" the twins exclaimed in excitement, as they ran to their aunts. Padme hugged them both as well.

"What are you doing here? This is such a nice surprise," Padme said.

"Well, we all know that you have Lea, but she, Obi-Wan, and your husband all thought you could use a little extra sisterly love right now," Sola said. Padme hugged Obi-Wan and Lea, before giving her husband a loving kiss.

"Thank you," she told them.

"Like I told you this morning, anything for you angel," Anakin replied.

"Aunt Sola, did you make shuura cookies?" Luke asked. Sola laughed and tickled him.

"You know I did you rascal. But you'll have to wait until after dinner," Sola replied.

"Is that Bantha Stew I smell, Beru?" Anakin asked.

"It is Anakin. Your mother's recipe," Beru replied.

"It smells wonderful," Anakin said.

"Yes it does. Go wash up you two," Padme said. The twins scampered off the fresher to wash their hands. Lea and Padme went into the kitchen with Beru, while Sola talked with Obi-Wan and Anakin. Obi-Wan held Jeena and she giggled, as her uncle Anakin tickled her tummy. Anakin smiled at his niece, before turning to Sola.

"So, is there any leads on finding this guy?" Sola asked. Anakin's smile faded.

"I'm afraid not. We do know that he's somehow helping the Sith and they're covering his tracks. He only stalks her when she's in public where he can't be sensed by me," Anakin replied. Sola looked worried for her baby sister.

"I'll find him Sola and I'll protect her with my life," Anakin promised. Sola smiled at him.

"I know you will Anakin," Sola replied, as Beru called them to dinner. The family sat down to enjoy the delicious meal together, momentarily forgetting about the problems of their outside lives.

On the remote end of Coruscant at a very small landing pad, a small ship landed. A figure cloaked in darkness exited that ship, but the few that did happen to see her never remembered, for their minds were wiped with a simple wave of her hand. Darth Zana slipped into the shadows upon which she thrived and began formulating her plan of attack...

Across the Stars

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars.

AN: Here's chapter 15! Thanks for all the great reviews. Enjoy and let me know what you think!

Never Gone II

Chapter 15: Across the Stars

Anakin tucked his children into their beds. Padme was still visiting with Sola and Beru, but promised to be in soon.

"Daddy, will you tell us a story?" Leia asked.

"Sure princess," Anakin replied. The twins laid quietly, waiting for their father to begin telling them a story about his many adventures.

"Once upon a time, there was a beautiful queen. She was loved and adored by her people and a good, benevolent ruler, despite her young age. But one day, an awful thing happened and a very bad man invaded the queen's beautiful planet with an army of droids. The bad man wanted to kill the queen, but two brave Jedi helped the queen escape, so they could travel to the Senate to ask for assistance for her world. But her ship malfunctioned and was forced to land on a remote, desert planet.

"Was the queen okay?" Luke asked.

"Yes, but her ship was broken. So, one of the Jedi and a Gungan that had tagged along were about to go into one of the cities on the desert planet to find parts for the ship. But the queen had curious nature and wanted to see this strange planet for herself. So, she disguised herself in plain clothing, as one of her own handmaidens and tagged along with the Jedi and the Gungan. The three of them ventured into town and found a little junk shop where they hoped to

find the parts they needed for their ship," The twins listened with rapt attention, as he continued.

"When they went inside the shop, they met the shop owner, who was a bit of a swindler. While the Jedi negotiated with the shop owner, the queen in disguise noticed a little boy sitting at the counter. The little boy had never seen such a beautiful girl before and he asked her if she was an angel. The girl thought he was just a silly boy, but she soon discovered that the little boy was a slave to the shop owner, along with his mother as well.

"He was a slave?" Leia asked in dismay.

"He was, but he agreed to help the Jedi get the parts he needed. The little boy entered a pod race and if he won, he would not only get the parts he needed for the queen's ship, but he would also win his freedom."

"Did he win?" Luke asked. Anakin smiled.

"He did and the Jedi wanted to bring the boy to the Jedi Temple so he could train him. The boy was going to go, but he was sad, because he had to leave his mother behind. The queen's ship was fixed and the little boy left with them."

"What happened next?" Leia asked.

"They arrived on Coruscant, but thing didn't go well for the queen or the little boy. The Senate was not willing to help the queen or her people. And the Jedi deemed the boy too old to be trained. So, the queen, the two Jedi, and the boy returned to the queen's planet in hopes of pushing the invaders out," Anakin said, noticing Padme's presence in the doorway.

"Did they win?" Luke asked.

"They did. The queen and her people fought to take back her palace, while the Gungan army fought the droid army. The little boy piloted a

ship into space and destroyed the control ship, which destroyed all the droids on the surface. And the queen and her people captured the bad men who behind the invasion.

"What happened to the Jedi?" Leia asked.

"They had to face a Sith Lord. Sadly, the Master was killed. But his padawan defeated the evil Sith and avenged his master's death.

"What happened after that?" Leia asked.

"The boy said goodbye to the queen and returned to his home planet to free his mother," Anakin replied.

"But...did he ever see the beautiful queen again?" Luke asked. Anakin smiled and nodded.

"Of course. You didn't think I'd tell you a story that didn't have a happy ending, did you?" he asked. The twins smiled.

"Ten years later, after the boy and girl queen had grown up, they met again," Anakin said, as Padme came up and wrapped her arms around his waist.

"They fell in love and got married. They had beautiful children together and they all lived happily ever after," Anakin concluded. The twins smiled, as their parents leaned down and kissed them good night.

"Sleep well, my angels," Padme said. The twins chorused good nights to their parents, as they left and quietly closed the door. Artoo turned his sensors on and bathed the room with a soft, blue glow.

"Hey Leia, do you think daddy's story really happened?" Luke asked.

"Of course it did," Leia replied.

"How do you know?" Luke asked.

"Cause silly. Mommy was the beautiful queen in his story and daddy was the little boy," Leia replied.

"How do you know that?" Luke asked.

"Cause mommy used to be queen of Naboo and daddy said he's from Tatooine and that's a desert planet. Duh, laser brain. Boys are so dense sometimes," Leia said, as she snuggled down under her blankets.

"I'm not dense and I'm not a laser brain," Luke replied.

"Are too,"

"Am not,"

"Are too,"

"Am not,"

"Are too,"

"Am not,"

The debate quickly ceased, as the children feel asleep...

"That was a wonderful story you told," Padme said, as she brushed her hair. Anakin leaned down and kissed her neck.

"I'm fond of it myself," he replied. Padme giggled, as she let herself be lifted into his arms and carried to bed.

"Do you know what my favorite part is?" Padme asked, as he laid above her, comfortable nestled over her petite form.

"Tell me," he replied, as she caressed his face and ran her fingers through his thick hair.

"It's the part where the little boy grows up to be the handsome man of the girl's dreams," she replied. Anakin leaned down and kissed her softly.

"I love you, my beautiful angel queen," he told her.

"And I love you my handsome protector," she replied, as his lips descended on hers...

The next morning, Padme stood on the veranda, seeing her husband and children off. He and Obi-Wan were taking them to school, before they headed for the KGR headquarters to tend to their duties and classes. Padme kissed him softly.

"I'll see you tonight," Padme said.

"Okay. If you have to out, which I would prefer you wouldn't..." He was stopped, as she placed her finger to his lips. She silenced him further with another passionate kiss.

"Captain Typho and his security team won't let me out of their sight. Do you really expect me to stay cooped up all day?" Padme asked.

"No, but...just be careful," Anakin pleaded.

"I will," she assured him.

"I couldn't bare it if anything happened to you," Anakin said, as he hugged her fiercely.

"I know, it's the same for me. You be careful as well," Padme replied.

"I will," he promised, as he leaned in for one more kiss, before he hopped into the waiting speeder and merged into the busy Coruscant traffic.

Anakin waited in the simulation room, looking over some data and flight tests from his students. Anakin smiled a bit, as he examined both Han and Lando's perfect scores. He had a soft spot for both boys, especially Han, who had started his class as an unruly, smart aleck teen that seemed to care for nothing and delighted in bullying others. But over the past few months, Anakin had begun to break down his walls and get to the real Han, who was really just a kid who was unsure about many things. And a kid who had an unloving, abusive father. Soon, all his students had arrived, except Han.

"Lando, have you seen Han today?" Anakin asked.

"No sir," Lando replied. Anakin was a little worried, but knew he had to start class.

"All right, everyone to their simulators," Anakin said.

About half way through class, General Solo came in, dragging Han with him. The boy had a nasty black eye and Anakin guessed he had several other bruises that weren't visible.

"Sorry the boy is late. He decided it would be a good idea to pick a fight with a bigger kid at school. As if he doesn't embarrass me enough already," the General said. Anakin had to control his anger and release it into the Force, because he had a feeling that the General was the "bigger kid".

"It's all right General. Han is an excellent student. He'll have no problem catching up. He's going to be an excellent pilot someday," Anakin replied calmly, even though anger burned inside him. Han hadn't been able to look Anakin yet, until he'd received that compliment.

"Well, I'm sure he'll find a way to screw it up somehow. Let me know if acts up again and I'll see that he's disciplined," the General said gruffly.

"I'm sure that won't be necessary, General," Anakin replied shortly. The General gave him a menacing stare, but Anakin was not intimidated in the slightest. The General stalked out without another word. Anakin laid a hand on Han's shoulder.

"Go ahead and hop in your simulator and just do half a course for today. Then we can talk after class," Anakin told him.

"Fine, but there's nothing to talk about. I just got into a fight at school, no big deal," Han said shortly, as he walked off to his simulator. But Anakin knew that wasn't the truth.

Sometime later, Anakin dismissed class and his students began filing out.

"Han, wait," Anakin called.

"Look...there ain't nothin' to talk about. I just got into a fight at school and the kid got the better of me," Han insisted testily.

"Han, I can sense you're lying and I could sense that your father was lying as well," Anakin replied.

"Don't be usin' your powers on me!" Han yelled. Anakin held his shoulders and made him look him in the eye.

"I didn't have to use my powers Han to know that you're trying to cover up something and that your father is lying about how you really got that black eye," Anakin replied.

"Look, it's not a big deal. I back talked my dad and got in his face about somethin' and he taught me a lesson for it. It's all right, I deserved it!" Han yelled, trying to shake free of Anakin's grasp.

"No Han, it's not all right. I don't care what you do or how bad you misbehave. You never deserve to be beaten for it!" Anakin said.

"He...he just gets a little carried away. And I am a pain sometimes ya know," Han defended.

"You're a kid Han you're still growing and learning. You're going to make mistakes, we all do. Believe me, I was no picnic when I was your age. My mom just disciplined me a bit differently," Anakin replied.

"What'd she do?" Han asked.

"Every time I lost my temper or acted out in anger, she'd make me do some chores that I hated. I thought it was the stupidest thing at the time, but do you know what it taught me?" Anakin asked.

"What?" Han asked.

"It taught me to think before just lashing out or losing my temper. And it taught me that I had to take responsibility for my actions. If it hadn't been for my mom, I might not have turned out so good," Anakin replied.

"Well, my dad views discipline differently and my mom is dead," Han replied.

"I'm sorry Han. I can't imagine how hard that must be for you," Anakin replied.

"Well, ya can't miss someone you never knew," Han replied bitterly.

"How did she die?" Anakin asked.

"Dad says she fell down the stairs one day. She had a concussion and didn't know it and one morning she just didn't wake up," Han replied.

" *Fell...or pushed,"* Anakin thought to himself. Han was about to leave, but Anakin put a hand on his shoulder.

"Han, I want to help you. What your father does to you is wrong and it doesn't have to be like that," Anakin replied.

"Why the hell do you care?" Han asked irritably.

"Because I care about you Han. You're a good kid. Padme and the twins care about you too," Anakin replied. He saw the unshed tears in Han's eyes and knew he was getting through to the boy. Suddenly, he felt a dark tremor rumble through the Force. Suddenly, they began hearing screams of terror throughout the building.

"What the heck is going on?" Han wondered, as he was about to approach the exit, but Anakin stopped him.

"There's a Sith in the building and it's not safe here," Anakin said.

"Listen carefully Han. I want you to go to my home and make sure Padme stays there. She's going to want to come after me, but she must not. It's not safe and it's exactly the opportunity that psycho will be waiting for," Anakin said. Han nodded.

"Yes sir," Han replied, as he headed for the outside exit. Once Han was gone, Anakin drew his saber and headed out to confront the Sith and stop her from hurting anyone else.

When he arrived in the atrium of the Senate building, the bodies of dozens of Senate guards, security, and military officers littered the floor. Frightened Senators, workers, and aides cowered in the corners of the room, farthest away as they could get from the cloaked figure in the center of the room. Anakin ignited his saber and looked straight into the bleeding yellow eyes under the hooded cloak.

"Let the innocent people leave and deal with me," Anakin said. The figure removed her hood and shed her dark cloak, revealing a woman of Bultar's Swan descent in a skin tight, black body suit.

"I care nothing about these useless people. It is you I have come to face, Chosen One," Darth Zana announced, as she ignited her crimson saber. Anakin raised his sapphire blade and they launched into battle...

Winter Solstice

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars

AN: Originally, this piece was done for a secret santa fic exchange I participated in earlier this month. It works so well as a Holiday story within NG II, that I made some adjustments in it and decided to share with everyone. As we left off in chapter 15, Anakin was engaging in battle with another Sith. Before we return to the action and suspense, let's take tonight to sit back and enjoy a holiday story–SW style. As Anakin finds himself facing another Sith, his thoughts dwell on his beautiful family and drift to just a few weeks earlier when they celebrated Winter Solstice on their beloved home world of Naboo...

Enjoy and Happy Holidays to everyone!

Never Gone II

Chapter 16: Winter Solstice–A Skywalker Family Story

As Anakin stared into the Sith's bleeding yellow eyes, he wondered what could have happened to her to cause so much hate. His thoughts, as always, drifted to his beautiful wife and children who meant absolutely everything to him. He never had to question why he continued to fight these menaces. It was always for them; for their safety and for their future. For a moment, he actually felt sorry for the Sith, because she probably had no idea what it was like to love someone or be loved back just as much. A small smile graced his lips, as he remembered the times they had spent together just a few weeks earlier, when they had gone home briefly to Naboo to celebrate Winter Solstice in the snowy lake country...

A Few Weeks Earlier...

The speeder hovered just above the frozen lake, carrying it's passengers to the dock at Varykino. Naboo was a thing of cold beauty this time of year. Snow dusted the roof of the lake house and blanketed the meadow. There were no Shaak's in sight, for the native animal was tucked away in hibernation for the season. The lake was frozen thick, enough to ice skate upon. Anakin Skywalker parked the speeder and stepped out. To the galaxy, he was Anakin Skywalker–the Chosen One, the Hero With No Fear. He was the savior of the galaxy, slayer of Sith Lords, handsome husband to the beautiful Senator of Naboo and father of her children. Today, he was very happy to be just the latter two. He was just happy being the devoted, loving husband and father to his wonderful family. They had left the problems and worries of the Senate behind them on Coruscant to come spend and celebrate Winter Solstice together on their beloved home world. They had been dealing with a lot on Coruscant lately, especially Padme, and he was looking forward to getting her to relax.

"Ani, are you okay?" Padme asked him, bringing him back to reality.

"I'm fine angel, just thinking about how great it is to be home," he replied, as he took her hand and helped her out of the speeder. The twins scampered out behind her, full of energy and rambunctiousness as usual.

"Daddy, can we go play in the snow?" Luke asked excitedly.

"No daddy, I want to go ice skating," Leia said.

"All right you two, settle down. We can do both. But first, you have to go inside and get your snow suits on," Padme said. The twins scampered off ahead of them, heading for the house. Anakin and Padme laughed, as they picked up their bags and headed for the house. Threepio had a few of the bags and followed along with Artoo.

"Oh my, what an unstable surface. All this cold is going to freeze my circuits," Threepio complained, as he trudged through the snow.

Artoo beeped something to Threepio.

"What did you say?" Threepio asked. Artoo blooped back at him.

"A useless chatter box? Why you little rust bucket!" Threepio replied, as he trotted after the chuckling astrodroid. The Kenobi family arrived not long after the Skywalker family and proceeded inside to put on their winter gear as well.

The twins trotted playfully through the snow covered meadow.

"Come on mommy and daddy!" Luke called to his parents. Anakin and Padme strolled behind their children hand in hand.

"We're coming," Anakin called, as he glanced over and smiled at Padme. She looked so beautiful with the hood of her cloak pulled up over her curls and her rosy cheeks. Anakin pulled her close and kissed her passionately. He tilted his head, slanting his mouth over hers and moved his lips over hers again and again. She smiled dreamily, as he broke the kiss.

"Wow, what was that for?" she asked.

"Because I love you," he replied.

"I love you too," she replied, as their lips met again in a soft array of passionate, ardent kisses. Suddenly, the both felt two very cold things pelt them. They broke the kiss and looked over to the pouting faces of their precocious twins who had just pelted them with snowballs to get their attention.

"Luke and Leia!" Padme lightly scolded, with a giggle.

"Well, if you two want to play that way..." Anakin said, as he ran toward his children. They squealed in excitement, as their father chased them about in the snow. Padme watched fondly, as her husband tickled their children once he'd caught them. They hollered

and squealed, as Anakin spun them around. Once he set them down, they ran to Padme and she knelt down to hug them. She and the twins suddenly felt cold objects pelt them and Padme looked up to see her husband packing another snowball tightly in his hands.

"Okay you two, get him," Padme said. Anakin laughed, as the three of them began tossing snowballs at him. He held up his hands in defeat, as his black cloak became dusted with white powder.

"Okay, okay, I surrender," he called. The twins bounded to him and he caught them in his arms, spinning them around. They spotted their cousins Ryoo and Pooja coming out to play too. Anakin let them down and the twins bounded over the greet their cousins. Anakin was caught off guard again when another snowball pelted him. He turned and eyed his beautiful wife with a mischievous stare. Her eyes widened playfully, as she saw him pick up some snow and begin forming it into a ball. She squealed and ran from him, as he began chasing her. Sola watched them chase and pelt each other with snowballs with great amusement. She shook her head.

"Those two are as bad as their children," she said to no in particular.

Padme screamed playfully, as he caught her in his arms and spun her around. They both laughed, as he lost his balance and they went tumbling into the snow. Padme pinned him underneath her petite body, as he laid on his back.

"I win," she declared. He cocked an eyebrow.

"And how do you figure that, milady?" he asked playfully.

"Because of this," she replied, as she lowered her lips to his softly. Slowly, she deepened the passionate kiss, sliding her tongue inside his warm mouth. They kissed intently and deeply, until Anakin felt two pairs of little eyes staring them down.

"We're gonna build a snowman. Will you and mommy help us?" Luke asked.

"Sure Lukie, we'll be there in just a minute," Anakin replied. Their children scampered off. Anakin helped Padme up and they brushed themselves off, before they followed their twins. After they built what Luke and Leia insisted was the best snowman ever, they had laid down in the snow with their cousins to make snow angels.

"Well, what do you say we make a couple of snow angels of our own?" Padme asked.

"Now why would we need to do that when there's a real live angel right here in front of me?" Anakin asked. Padme blushed slightly, as he pulled her into his arms and kissed her deeply. She felt all the problems and worries of the Senate melt away when he held her in his arms and kissed her. Anakin felt a tug at his cloak and broke the kiss to glance down at his doe-eyed daughter.

"Daddy, can we go ice skating now?" Leia asked impatiently. Anakin was terrible at ice skating, but he couldn't deny his baby girl anything. She had him wrapped around her finger; and she knew it too.

"Sure princess," he replied, as they headed for the frozen lake.

While the Skywalker family headed for the frozen lake. Obi-Wan and Lea held Jeena's hands, as she playfully trotted through the snow with excitement. Lea and Obi-Wan exchanged warm glances and snuck a few soft kisses, completely content to be together as a family and leave the worries of Coruscant forgotten.

Once their skates were on, the twins began to slide around on the ice. Anakin watched Padme in amazement, as she moved fluidly and gracefully on the ice with ease. She had been doing this most of her life and was very good at it. He watched, as she held out her arms for Luke, who was clumsily skating toward her. He watched fondly, as she cuddled him close, kissing his cheek, and telling him what a good job he was doing.

"Come on daddy," Leia insisted. Hand in hand with his daughter, he carefully skated out to meet his wife and son. Luke and Leia joined hands and began skating together.

"Stay close," Padme called to them, as her husband wrapped his arms around her waist.

"I'm not very good at this," he said. She kissed him softly.

"You're doing fine. Come on," Padme insisted, as she took his hands and she skated backwards, pulling him along with her.

"I love you," Anakin told her.

"I know, I love you too," she replied, as they stopped to kiss tenderly under the quickly fading daylight. Once they realized it was beginning to get dark, they rounded up the twins.

"Come on you two, it's time to go inside," Padme said, as she unlaced her skates and slipped back into her boots.

"Ah mommy, do we hafta?" Luke asked.

"Yes Luke, it's going to start getting even colder soon. Let's go inside and mommy will make hot cocoa," Padme told him. Luke and Leia cheered and bounded off toward the house. Anakin chuckled, as he watched them go.

"Come on angel, let's go warm up by the fire," he said, as he wrapped his arm around her waist and they followed the twins back to the house.

As they entered the house, they inhaled the smell of home cooked food. They sat down with their family for Winter Solstice eve feast. Then, later in the family room, the Skywalker, Kenobi and Naberrie families gathered around the Winter Solstice tree to open gifts. Anakin and Padme watched fondly, as their children opened their

gifts and played with their new toys. Lea and Obi-Wan watched Jeena fondly as well, as she clapped her hands in excitement, as she opened her own gifts.

"I have my gift for you, but it's upstairs," Anakin said, as he sipped at the hot cocoa she'd made.

"I have my gift for you too, but it's upstairs too. I thought we could give them to each other later after we put the twins to bed," Padme replied. Anakin smiled.

"Sounds perfect," Anakin replied.

Anakin listened fondly, as she sang the twins a sweet holiday lullaby. He came up and wrapped his arms around her waist from behind. She looked up at him for a moment, as she continued singing. The twins eyes drooped shut fairly easily, for they'd had quite a busy day. Padme concluded the song and leaned down to kiss them goodnight. Anakin did as well, before they quietly slipped out of the room, leaving Artoo to silently watch over them.

Padme exited the fresher in her robe and saw that her husband was also ready for bed, dressed in his black sleep pants and button down top, which he'd left open. He took her hand and led her to the sofa, where they sat down together. Anakin leaned in and pressed his lips to hers tenderly, before pulling back and smiling at her.

"Happy Winter Solstice, angel," he said, as he haded her a small case.

"Oh Ani," she said, as she carefully opened the hinged lid. She gasped, as she laid eyes on a beautiful, silver locket, adorned with twin sapphires.

"Oh Anakin...it's so beautiful..." she said in awe.

"Open it," he said. She carefully took the locket out of the case and opened it. Inside, on one side was a tiny holo of her and Anakin. And on the other side, was a tiny holo of the twins.

"Oh Ani...it's wonderful..." she said, as tears welled in her eyes. She turned and pulled her hair aside so he could place it around her neck. The chain was long enough that the locket rested above her bosom on her upper chest.

"There...now the twins and I are always close to your heart," he whispered in her ear. She turned her head and gave him a passionate kiss.

"Thank you. It's beautiful Ani...I love it," she said, as she continued to kiss him softly, before she reached over to retrieve her gift for him.

"I think we both kind of had the same idea," she said, as she handed him a rectangular case.

"Happy Winter Solstice, my love," she said. He smiled and opened the case. Inside was a very nice silver watch. The face of the watch was blank and Anakin watched as she pressed a button on the side. The face of the chrono came into view.

"It's wonderful Padme, thank you. I needed a new chrono. How did you know that Obi-Wan keeps yelling at me for being late?" he joked. She giggled.

"Just a hunch, my love. But that's not all it does," Padme said, as she pressed the button on the side again. The chrono face faded into a holo of them of the twins.

"Now the twins and I are always close to you too," she said. He leaned in and kissed her.

"I absolutely love it angel and I love you, more than anything," he said.

"I love you too Ani. But that's only part of your present," she said, as she stood up and walked toward the bed.

"What's the other part?" he asked, as he followed her. She undid the cord of her robe and turned around. She let it fall to the floor, revealing her form dressed in a barely there, white negligee. It was very short, revealing most of her shapely legs to him. The straps were very thin and it dipped low in a v, barely concealing her full breasts.

"Happy Winter Solstice indeed," he said, as his eyes locked on her beautiful body in which she was displaying for him.

"Well, what are you doing way over there baby? Come unwrap your present," she said sultrily, as she scanned his body, undressing him with her eyes. He closed the distance between them and swept her into his arms. Carefully, he pulled back the covers and laid her down gently on the sheets, before pinning her beneath him. She hummed in satisfaction, as he kissed her deeply, settling himself over her.

Anakin kissed her tenderly, in a series of short, soft kisses. He pressed his lips tightly to hers and traced his tongue along her bottom lip. She eagerly parted her lips, allowing his silky tongue to invade her mouth. His tongue searched for hers and their tongues collided in a sensual rhythm. Padme felt those familiar tingles that she always felt throughout her entire body when he kissed her. His lips moved to her neck, leaving a trail of fire in their wake, as he slowly kissed down her neck. The fires of passion licked at their every nerve and consumed them in the hot fire of their love...

Much later, they bathed in the afterglow of their lovemaking. They kissed and caressed softly, enjoying the bliss that they always felt when they were together.

"I love you Anakin Skywalker," she said.

"And I love you Padme Skywalker," he replied, as he kissed her softly.

"Happy Winter Solstice, my love," Padme said, as she kissed him again.

"Happy Winter Solstice to you too angel," he replied, as he devoured her lips in a deep, passionate kiss. The fires of their passion burned as brightly as ever again, as they again surrendered to the unbridled passion and love that flowed so effortlessly between them. Their love consumed them again and continued to into the early morning hours, as they fed their bodies' and hearts' desires. These moments together were what truly mattered. Days like these, where they spent hours playing with their children were what truly mattered. Family was the most important thing in the galaxy to both of them. There were problems to be solved and evil to be dispelled, but no matter what, they would prevail and always be together...

Present Day

Anakin let the thoughts of his family and the love he felt for them wash over him, as he prepared to engage the Sith in a battle to the death...

Anakin vs Zana

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars.

AN: Here's chapter 16! Enjoy and let me know what you think:)

Never Gone II

Chapter 17: Anakin vs. Zana

Anakin's sapphire blade collided again and again with the Sith's. Every move she made was calculated and deadly, proving that she was in a different league than the previous two Sith he'd faced so far.

"I'm not like those other halfwits you've faced before and I will destroy you!" Zana said furiously, as she parried his saber.

"You may be powerful, but you're just like the rest. You're evil and bent on destroying everything good and pure. But I'll stop you...all of you," Anakin replied, as he slashed at her and blocked her deadly strikes.

"We shall see, Chosen One. The dark side is infinitely powerful," Zana taunted.

"So is the light and so is love. Far more powerful than you can imagine," Anakin retorted. But he also knew that she was indeed in a different league than the other's he'd faced so far. And it would take everything he had to defeat her...

Han arrived at the Skywalker family apartment, located on the posh skyline of Republica 500.

"Hello Han. What brings you here?" Padme greeted him.

"There's another Sith. This one got into the Senate building somehow and your husband is fighting it," Han said. Padme sighed deeply, as she stepped to the window and gazed out.

"You can't go over there. It's way too dangerous," Han said. Padme smiled thinly.

"He sent you here to make sure I stay put, didn't he?" Padme asked knowingly.

"Yes maim," Han replied.

"He's right too, you know. With that psycho out there after you, it's too dangerous," Han said. Padme sighed.

"I know," she said, as she turned to him.

"Now, sit down and I will go get you something to put on that eye," Padme replied.

"Oh, you don't have to bother with it," Han assured her.

"If you don't put some ice on that, it will stay black and blue longer. Besides, it looks like it hurts and ice will help that too," Padme said.

"A little," Han admitted about the pain. A few moments later, Padme returned from the kitchen with an ice compress. Padme sat next to him and pressed the compress to his face. Han hissed in pain slightly.

"Han, did your father do this to you?" Padme asked. Han snorted.

"Am I that transparent?" Han questioned. Padme smiled softly at him.

"Well, I am married to the Chosen One," she replied.

"He already dragged the truth outta me," Han admitted.

"He cares about you Han; we both do," Padme replied.

"Why? My own father doesn't give a damn about me, so why should you or your husband?" Han asked, as he stood up.

"Han, I don't know why your father is the way he is, but I do know that it is wrong for him to hit you no matter what you do," Padme replied, as she put her hand on his shoulder.

"He came home drunk last night and I guess I sort of got in his way," Han replied.

"There is never a reason or excuse to abuse your child," Padme stated.

"Tell that to the General," Han replied.

"If I am given the opportunity, I will. And so will Anakin. He may be a General, but he is not above the law. I'm a Senator and Anakin is one of the most powerful men in the galaxy and we are not above the law either. And Republic law says that you cannot abuse your children," Padme replied.

"Well, he's never gonna change," Han said.

"Maybe not, but always know that you have a place here," Padme replied.

"Thank you," Han replied, as he looked down.

"What is it?" Padme asked.

"Nothin'...it's silly," Han replied.

"I'm sure it's not silly. You can tell me," Padme urged.

"Well, I was just thinkin' about how I never knew my mom. But if I would have, I hope she would have been a lot like you. Luke and Leia are lucky kids," Han said. Padme smiled.

"That's very sweet of you Han and it's not silly at all. And if you need a mother of sorts to talk to or confide in, I'll be here," she replied.

"Thanks," an replied, as he watched her gaze out the window toward the Senate building.

"Hey, I'm sure he'll be fine. He's defeated all those other Sith," Han said. Padme nodded and forced a smile, though she just couldn't shake the bad feeling she had in the pit of her stomach.

Anakin wiped the blood away from his lip, as Zana had just landed a kick across his face.

"I'm an expert in hand to hand combat. What I did to Bultar is only a small taste of what I'm going to do to you!" Zana screamed, as she aimed another kick for his abdomen. He avoided it, but she was ready for that, as she swept his feet out from under him with a low drop spin kick. Anakin fell on his back, but used his momentum to leap to his feet again. Zana brought her saber up over her head and then down on him. He blocked with his own and pushed up. She broke the deadlock and angrily landed a spiral kick to his chest. The force of it knocked the wind from him and sent him crashing back into one of the atriums giant pillars. Zana smirked evilly and hurled Force lightning at him. Anakin raised his saber in time to catch most of it. She growled, as she poured it heavily at him. He used all his strength and deflected it, causing it to hit the ceiling. The building rumbled, as the plaster cracked under the pressure.

"It's been a long time since I've had such a formidable opponent. I will enjoy defeating you and then killing you," Zana said. Zana's energetic style of saber technique was grueling, but Anakin kept in step with her. Sweat beaded on his forehead, as he met her saber time and again. His muscles burned and sweat soaked his hair, but he didn't let up in the least. She was becoming winded too, but didn't show any signs of letting up either.

"You are a formidable opponent. My master was right, but I will be the one to finally defeat you," Zana panted.

"We'll see," Anakin replied, as he parried her blade and spun around, bringing his blade down at her. She snarled and blocked him. She surged forward, slashing furiously and pushing him back against one of the large pillars. She drew back and stabbed at him. He dodged and she left a burning hole in the dura plaster of the giant pillar.

"How much longer do you think you can keep up this pace, Skywalker?" Zana taunted.

"You'd be surprised," Anakin retorted.

"You'll begin to slow soon and then I'll move in for the kill. Then, I'll display your broken, lifeless body for the galaxy to see. People will tremble in fear when they see what I've done to their beloved hero," Zana said.

"You talk too much," Anakin replied. Zana laughed evilly and surged forward with a series of powerful strikes. Anakin met and blocked everyone of them and the battle between them raged strong...

Padme greeted the twins with open arms, as they arrived home from school.

"Mommy, I'm worried about daddy," Leia cried.

"Me too sweetheart," Padme replied.

"Obi-Wan just commed me. He and some of the other masters are trying to get in, but apparently the Sith is got some kind of Force hold on the lock and they can't get in," Lea said. Padme stepped to the window, as tears began to stream down her face. Lea handed Jeena over to Dorme.

"Han, why don't you take the twins and go with Dorme into the kitchen for a snack," Lea suggested.

"Sure maim," Han replied, as he ushered the twins into the kitchen. Lea put a hand on Padme's shoulder and she turned to Lea, her face stained with tears.

"Oh Padme," Lea said, as she hugged her tightly.

"I can't lose him Lea," she cried.

"Oh honey, you're not going to lose him," Lea replied.

"You don't understand. I had the most...horrible dream the other night. He...had me and he told me Anakin was dead. Then...then he was raping me and I kept...crying for Anakin through...our bond, but I couldn't feel...him anymore. He was gone..." Padme sobbed.

"Oh sweetheart, it was just a nightmare," Lea assured her.

"But what if was a...premonition of what's to come? I can't lost him...I can't..." Padme sobbed.

"Look at me Padme. You're not going to lose him. Obi-Wan will find a way inside that building and they'll defeat the Sith," Lea assured her. Suddenly, the com on the far end of the room began beeping with an incoming transmission.

"That could be Obi-Wan," Padme said, as she began wiping her tears. Lea accepted the transmission, hoping to hear good news from her husband. But on the screen was Anakin fighting the vicious Sith Lord, Darth Zana.

"Anakin!" Padme cried. The battle looked as though it was being filmed from a distance and then they heard a garbled sounding voice.

"He's going to die...and then I'll be coming for you my rose. You're going to be mine at last..." the voice said. Padme screamed, as she

saw the Sith trip Anakin. He fell and the Sith hovered over him, reading to drive her saber through his heart. Padme screamed again and her breathing came in heaving, ragged gasps.

"Padme, you need to calm down," Lea urged, as she held her cousin up.

"Anakin..." Padme cried, as her eyes rolled back in her head and she went limp against Lea.

"Han, come quickly!" Lea called, panic in her voice. Han rushed in and quickly helped Lea lift Padme to the sofa. Lea shut the holocom off, before the twins could see it.

"Mommy!" Luke and Leia cried in alarm, as they rushed to her.

"Dorme, call Barriss and have her come right away," Lea said. A few moments later, Sola and Beru arrived from the market.

"Oh my, what happened?" Sola asked.

"The entire planet is on lock down. We barely made it home. We were almost stuck at the market," Beru said.

"There's a Sith Lord at the Senate building and Anakin is fighting it. A few minutes ago, we received a transmission over the holocom. I answered it, because I thought it could be Obi-Wan, but it was him. He taunted her and told her Anakin was going to die and then he was coming for her. He's there in the building somewhere, watching the battle. Lea said quietly, so only Sola, Beru and Han could hear her.

"Mommy, wake up please," Luke said, as he sniffed and tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Luke and Leia, come here," Sola coaxed.

"Aunt Sola, what's wrong with mommy?" Leia sobbed.

"She just fainted sweetie, but she'll be okay. Healer Offee is coming to look at her just to make sure," Sola said, coming to look at her just to make sure," Sola said. Luke sobbed silently against Beru's shoulder, while Beru rocked him gently. Barriss arrived and Han answered the door. The family waited quietly, as Barriss examined Padme.

Zana tripped Anakin and he landed on his back. She prepared to drive her saber through his heart, but he rolled away and sprung to his feet his heart, but he rolled away again. Their sabers spun wildly, clashing and slashing at a breakneck speed.

"After I kill you, I've decided that I will be delivering your children to my master as a gift, so he can train them into Sith," Zana said evilly.

"You won't touch my children," Anakin growled back, as he slashed furiously. Zana laughed evilly.

"I can't wait to present your head as a gift to him as well," Zana replied, as the battle between them raged on.

Master Kuro and Master Jill landed on Korriban after the nearly twelve hour journey in their star fighters. The air on Korriban bled with the dark side. The two Jedi Masters began trekking toward the ancient Sith temple, hoping to find any clue as to where the Sith might be. As they arrived at the temple, they began searching the grounds.

"Looking for something Jedi?" a menacing, female voice asked. Kuro and Pablo Jill whirled around to face the red Twi'lek female that had just appeared.

"Who are you?" Master Jill demanded, as he ignited his saber.

"I suppose it is only right to tell you the name of the person that shall be your executioner. I'm Darth Malina, my master's top apprentice,"

the Twi'lek replied.

"So, we were right. You and your master do have operations here," Kuro said, as she ignited her saber. Malina laughed evilly.

"You don't know anything, foolish Jedi," she cackled, as she ignited her own crimson saber. Kuro snarled angrily and charged at the Sith. Malina clashed sabers with the dark woman, evading her strikes with ease. Malina side stepped Kuro's blade and stepped behind her. Kuro found herself shadowboxing against the Sith and soon realized that Malina was simply toying with her.

"Pathetic Jedi, your powers are no match for me. I sincerely hope the Chosen One puts up a better fight," Malina said, as she mercilessly beheaded Kuro. The headless body of the Jedi Master fell to the ground in a heap. Pablo Jill felt fear overwhelm him, as the Sith turned her attention to him.

"You're even more pathetic than she was. I do hope that Master Windu realizes what complete incompetence he had on his Council and replaces you with someone half way decent. Oh wait, he has no one else to choose from, because the Jedi Order is dead," Malina snarled evilly at him. Pablo Jill raised his saber, as she charged at him. Pablo Jill fruitlessly tried to parry her strikes, but the evil Sith was too much for him. With a swift strike, she thrusted her saber into his heart, killing him instantly. Malina smirked as she extinguished her saber.

"I didn't even work up a sweat. How pathetic the Jedi have become," she smirked evilly, as she retreated back inside the temple ruins to report to her master...

Barriss examined Padme thoroughly, as she laid on her bed. She had awakened just a few minutes ago and was overcome with nausea. She'd emptied the contents of her stomach in the fresher and now was waiting quietly, as Barriss examined her and ran several tests.

"Barriss, is she going to be okay? Lea asked. Barriss smiled and chuckled slightly, as she examined the results on the datapad.

"I cannot believe I did not see this a few days ago. I suppose I was not looking for it," Barriss said. Lea looked at her with a perplexed expression. Barriss approached Padme's bedside and smiled at her.

"Padme, I think I've discovered the true source of your nausea and fatigue. I should have seen this sooner, but on the surface it appeared that you were only having anxiety attacks due to the added stress. But there is another factor that is complicating things and making your condition more fragile," Barriss said.

"Is it serious?" Padme asked timidly. Barriss smiled warmly at her.

"Padme, you're ten weeks pregnant," Barriss replied. Padme looked at her in shock and then a smile slowly spread on her face.

"I guess that would explain a lot of my symptoms," Padme replied.

"Yes, but I am very concerned Padme. This added stress is not good for the baby at all. I'll be leaving all the vitamins and supplements you need to start taking. You're not showing at all yet, which is not unusual at this stage, especially since you're only carrying one child this time. But I want you eating well and regularly. We will see how things progress, but if the stress of your situation with this stalker keeps on the course it is now, I will probably have to have you take an extended leave until after the baby is born. Your lake home on Naboo would be an ideal place, as it is somewhere you can be assured of privacy. I will see you and Anakin in a week for your first ultra sound," Barriss said. Padme smiled.

"Thank you so much Barriss," Padme replied.

"Oh Padme, this is such wonderful news," Beru said. Padme smiled.

"I can't wait to tell Ani," Padme replied. Her smile faded, as she realized that her husband was still fighting that monstrous Sith Lord.

"Don't even think it baby sister. Anakin will come home to you. Then, you'll tell him that he's going to be a daddy again. For now, we will keep this between us, because goodness knows the twins would blurt it out to him before you even got the chance," Sola said.

"Yes, they will. I'll never again let them in on any gift I get for Anakin. Last year and the year before, Leia told him what he was getting for his life-day," Padme said. The other women laughed.

"Who knows, you may be having another precocious little girl," Sola said.

"Or a rambunctious little boy," Beru added. Padme sat thoughtfully for a moment.

"Barriss, do you think you may be able to tell the sex of the baby at my ultrasound next week?" Padme asked.

"That depends on the baby's position. But if I can, do you want to know?" Barriss asked. Padme nodded, as her thoughts drifted back to her husband.

" *Please come home my love...we need you..."* Padme thought to herself.

Light vs Dark

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AN: Here's chapter 18! Enjoy and please let me know what you think:)

Never Gone II

Chapter 18: Light vs. Dark

The sound of hissing and crackling light sabers echoed through the atrium of the Senate building, as a fierce battle between good and evil raged. Zana snarled evilly, as she parried another of his strikes. She brought her hand forward in a pushing motion, attempting to Force push him back. Anakin countered with his own Force push. She pushed harder until Anakin was bending back. With a strong shove, Anakin pushed her back and regained his footing. She snarled and swung her saber at him. Thinking quickly, he flipped up and over her to avoid her deadly swipe. He landed behind her and back flipped a couple times to create distance between them. They took the brief lapse in battle to attempt to catch their breath. Zana smirked evilly.

"This has been fun Skywalker, but I've decided it's time to kill you now," Zana said, as blue Force lightning erupted from her fingertips. Anakin raised his saber and caught the attack. He felt his feet begin to slide back, as he struggled against her. He gritted his teeth, as he felt the lightning sear his hands. He closed his eyes and reached deeply into the Force. He let go of the anger and frustration he felt and let love replace them. Zana smirked, as she saw a bright silver shield surrounding him and his eyes were lit with the power of the light side.

"Your powers won't save you this time Chosen One!" Zana screamed, as she raised her other arm and doubled her stream of

lightning. Anakin was caught completely off guard when her lightning managed to penetrate his shield. He cried out in agony, as she poured Force lightning into him. He was thrown back against one of the giant pillars and he writhed in pain, as she poured her attack into him.

"Master Tyrannus has trained some of us to be powerful enough to break through your shield. Your powers are no match for me," she said evilly, as she watched him writhe in agony. Anakin struggled to gain control and began Force pushing against the lightning, trying to strengthen his shield.

Padme paced worriedly in the living area. The twins watched her, as they played quietly. Lea tried in vain to feed a very fussy Jeena her supper. Lea held the spoon in front of Jeena's lips, as the child sat in her high chair.

"Come on sweetie, you need to eat," Lea pleaded. The little girl frowned.

"Daddy!" Jeena cried.

"Oh sweetie, daddy will be home soon, I promise," Lea assured her. Padme felt a tug on her skirt and looked down to see Luke and Leia staring up at her.

"Mommy, I'm scared. Daddy's hurting," Leia said. Padme sunk to her knees and pulled her daughter into her arms.

"I know baby. But we have to be strong for daddy," Padme said. Luke wrapped his little arms around his mother and sister.

"Daddy's gonna be okay," Luke said.

"How do you know?" Leia asked, as her mother wiped her tears away.

"Cause daddy is the strongest, bestest Knight in the galaxy," Luke said. Padme smiled at her son and brushed his bangs from his eyes.

"We have to be strong for daddy. He'll come home, because he loves us all so much, and he won't let anything keep us apart," Padme said, trying to reassure them all. The twins nodded and hugged her tightly.

"Oh, I love you both so much," Padme said.

"Now, why don't you go with Han and eat dinner. Aunt Beru almost has it ready," Padme said.

"Aren't you gonna eat too mommy?" Luke asked.

"I am sweetheart. I'll be there in just a minute," Padme replied. The twins scampered off to the dining room with Han, as Lea came up beside her.

"You know how important it is for you to eat," Lea told her.

"I know. But until I know he's okay, I don't think I'll be able to keep anything down. He's in pain Lea...I can feel it," Padme said. Lea wrapped her arms around her cousin and let her cry on her shoulder.

Anakin cried out in pain, as some of her lightning still penetrated his strengthened shield. Anakin knew that he had to take himself out of the lightning's path. With a strong Force push, he pushed her attack back long enough to side step it. Her lightning barreled into the giant pillar and a loud explosion was heard, as the pillar cracked and snapped in two. The building rumbled, as the ceiling cracked and broke around the pillar, sending the giant beam crashing to the floor. Anakin rolled away from the falling beam, just as it crashed a few feet from him. Pieces of dura plaster and metal support beams crashed and clanged on the floor. Dust and dirt filled the air. Anakin climbed to his feet and squinted his eyes, trying to locate Zana. Unfortunately, he did not see the metal beam barreling toward him

until it was too late. The beam slammed into him, hitting him lengthwise across the chest. Anakin fell hard on his back and slid across the marble floor. He felt a few of his ribs give way and pain erupt in his chest. He immediately knew he probably had a few bruised ribs or possibly even broken ones. He gritted his teeth in pain and searched frantically for his saber. It laid, extinguished several feet away. Before he could try to call it to his hand, Zana was looming over him. She kicked him hard in the ribs. Anakin cried out in pain again, as she kicked him there two more times. He coughed and had the metallic taste of blood in his mouth. Some of the crimson liquid spattered on the floor, as he coughed hard. Zana laughed evilly, enjoying his pain. She mercilessly kicked him in the abdomen before she knelt down to him. She grabbed a fist full of his hair and turned his head to face her.

"You know...it's a shame you fight on the wrong side. You're very attractive. Your wife is a lucky woman...or at least she was, since she's about to become a widow," Zana said, as she traced a finger along his face. Anakin shrugged away in disgust and Zana smirked, as she loomed over him. The pain in his chest was staggering and he struggled to keep his vision clear. He could barely move without sending searing pain through his chest. But he knew he had to do something or he would die. Zana pulled a dagger from her belt and set her light saber aside. She traced the cold metal of the blade along the skin on his neck.

"Any last words for your widow, before I take your head and show everyone why you shouldn't cross a Sith?" she asked, as she loomed over him, ready for the kill...

Sweat dripped down Obi-Wan's face, as he worked tirelessly to open the blast door. His saber hissed, as it slowly melted the steal, having been thrusted into the center of the door. But it was a slow process. He was trying to melt through three durasteel doors. The Senate building was equipped with these nearly indestructible doors, as a security measure and were triggered during the battle due to the

damage the atrium was receiving. The security measure had been developed after Aurra Sing's assassination attempt on Padme over six years ago. They were meant lock attackers out or keep them in. They were serving their purpose all too well, as Obi-Wan sensed another intense wave of pain vibrate from Anakin through the Force.

"Hang on Anakin," Obi-Wan said, determination lining his face. Suddenly, an emerald blade and an amethyst blade pierced through the steel, joining the fight. Obi-Wan looked over, only to find Yoda and Mace helping him.

"Save young Skywalker, we must or all will be lost," Yoda said. Obi-Wan could see regret in Mace's eyes, but he knew there would be time for talk later. Right now, it was imperative that they got in that room.

Anakin fought another wave of nausea and unconsciousness that was trying to overcome him. He strained to reach Zana's light saber, which was near his arm. Luckily, she was too busy taunting him to notice. Anakin winced, as she grabbed a fist full of his hair again. She pressed the blade to his throat.

"Time to take your pretty head to my master as a souvenir. I can only imagine the rewards that await me," Zana said. She failed to notice her saber in his hand, pointing up at her, until it was too late. She drove the blade harder against his skin, trying to kill him first.

"Go to...hell you Sith bitch," Anakin rasped, as he pressed the igniter. The crimson blade pierced her heart and came out her back. She screamed in agony for just a minute, cursing him, before she fell to the floor...dead. Anakin pushed her body away and panted air into his lungs. He found it hard to breath and was afraid he had punctured a lung. Suddenly, he felt another dark presence.

"Well done, Chosen One. Darth Zana should have killed you when she had the chance. She always had a bad habit of toying with her prey before she finally killed it. No matter though, I shall finish what

she started," Severus said, as he approached the wounded young man. Severus pulled Zana's saber from Anakin's weakened grip. He extinguished it and clipped it to his belt, before igniting his own blade. Anakin gritted his teeth, as he tried to stand. As Anakin made it to his feet, he was immediately back handed by Severus. As the back of his metal hand made contact, Anakin screamed in pain. He hit the floor hard again. Severus thrusted his saber downward at Anakin's prone bod. Anakin rolled away, but not before the saber grazed his shoulder. Severus loomed over him again.

"Goodbye Chosen One," Severus said, as he prepared to kill him. Suddenly, the metal door swung open.

"Get away from him Severus!" Obi-Wan demanded.

"Too late Kenobi. Say goodbye to the Galaxy's beloved hero!" Severus said, as he thrusted his saber downward. But Severus felt himself being lifted off the ground. Yoda and Mace Force pushed him into the wall. They ignited their sabers and prepared to fight him, while Obi-Wan rushed over to Anakin.

"Anakin...Anakin, can you hear me?" Obi-Wan asked, as he knelt beside the young man.

"Obi-Wan?" Anakin asked weakly.

"I'm here Anakin and I'm going to get you to a healer. Just lie still," Obi-Wan said. Seeing the blood on Anakin's lips was a clear indication that he was bleeding internally. Obi-Wan unbuttoned his tunic, revealing angry bruises all over his chest. Obi-Wan placed a hand on Anakin's forehead and reached deeply into the Force in an attempt to assess all his injuries.

Severus parried the furious onslaught led by the two Jedi Masters.

"Next time, I'll make sure there is no interference when I face the Chosen One. Next time, they'll be no one to save him," Severus said.

"There won't be a next time, Jarec," Mace replied.

"Escape this time, you will not," Yoda added. Severus knew that he couldn't be captured. His master was very clear on this. His only option was escape or death, for he could not risk any of his master's plans being uncovered before the time was right. Using his strong, metal arms, he knocked them both away forcefully. Then, he used his immense strength to lift the fallen pillar that lay nearby. He brought his arm back and threw it toward the four men. Yoda and Mace raised their hands to stop the giant structure. They managed to stop it and slowly set it down. But that small distraction had provided Severus with the time he needed to escape.

"I'll go after him," Mace said, but Yoda shook his head.

"Already at the landing platform, he is. Gone he will be by the time you arrive. Help Obi-Wan lift young Skywalker. Get him to Bant, we must," Yoda said. Mace nodded.

When they arrived, Bant and Barriss were ready.

"Put him here," Bant told them. Together, Mace and Obi-Wan lifted him onto the med table. Bant and Barriss moved the examining tunnel over his body and turned it on. On top of the flat surface of the machine, Anakin's insides were visible through x-ray.

"Six broker ribs, a punctured lung and internal bleeding. I need several bone and tissue regenerators," Bant told the med droid.

"I'm reading a minor saber burn on the shoulder and a minor concussion," Barriss said, as she grabbed two small, square-like devices. She placed them both on his forehead and switched them on. They hummed to life and went to work. Anakin moaned, as his head and vision started t o clear, thanks to the devices.

"Padme..." he called.

"I need to inform Padme and bring her here," Obi-Wan said.

"Wait Obi-Wan. I'll go get her and bring her here. You stay with Anakin. I have been very unfair to her the last few years...and it is time I apologize," Mace said. Obi-Wan nodded, as he left. The med droid wheeled a cart over to Bant. Several square-like devices rested on it. They were much like the ones on Anakin's forehead, only significantly larger. Bant placed one on each of his pectorals, two more a few inches below that and then two more on his abdomen. Barriss placed two more over his right pectoral next to the one that was already there to deal with the punctured lung. The ones on his chest would repair his ribs and the ones of his abdomen would repair the tissue and stop the bleeding. The devices were switched on and Anakin cried out in pain, as they stimulated his injuries. The nerve inhibitors began to work right away and Anakin relaxed and slowly fell into a deep, much needed sleep. The regenerators had begun to work on his injuries.

Sola answered the door, only to find Mace Windu behind it.

"Master Windu," Sola greeted.

"Hello maim, it is important that I speak to the Senator," Mace said kindly.

"Of course. Padme, come in here!" Sola called. Padme exited the kitchen quickly.

"Master Windu...is this about Anakin?" Padme asked.

"Yes milady. He defeated one of the Sith, but sustained some serious injuries in the battle. However, Bant and Barriss are treating him and they are confident that he will make a full recovery. If you'll allow me to milady, I will escort you there to see him," Mace said.

"Thank you master Windu. Just let me get my cloak," Padme turned, only to find Lea there holding it already.

"Thanks Lea," she replied, as she slipped into it.

"Lea, Obi-Wan is on the comm station for you," Beru said.

"Thanks Beru. See you later," Lea told Padme, as she hugged her. Padme smiled and left with Mace.

"I must say, I am surprised Master Windu. I know Anakin and I are not your favorite people," Padme said.

"Yes and I owe you both many apologies for my actions and the actions of the Council these last few years. I have been wrong and it took Master Yoda leaving to make me realize the destructive path we were headed down," Mace said, as they reached his speeder.

"Your apology is accepted, Master Windu. But what of the rest of the Council?" Padme asked.

"Masters Kuro and Jill visited Korriban in hopes of finding clues to the whereabouts of the Sith. I felt them die in the Force. I assume they were killed by Dooku or another one of his apprentices'," Mace said.

"I'm sorry for your loss," Padme said sincerely.

"Thank you milady. As for the rest of the Council, they have expressed their reluctant willingness to follow my lead," Mace replied.

"It seems that congratulations are in order for you and Anakin though," Mace said, with a small smile, as they arrived at the KGR headquarters. Padme smiled and placed a hand on her stomach.

"Yes, thank you. I can't wait to tell Anakin," she replied.

Padme rushed into the med room where her husband lay on a med table.

"Anakin!" she called, as she rushed to him. He was sleeping and she observed the several regenerators that were attached to him and the bruising on his face and chest.

"Oh Ani, what did they do to you?" Padme said, as she brushed his shaggy bangs from his eyes.

"He's going to be all right. They're going to be moving him to a room soon and they're putting an extra bed in it, since they know there will be no getting you to leave," Obi-Wan said.

"How extensive were his injuries?" Padme asked. Obi-Wan sighed.

"A minor concussion and a minor saber burn to the shoulder. Six broken ribs, a punctured lung and some internal bleeding," Obi-Wan said. Tears stung Padme's eyes, as she gently stroked his face.

"I'm sorry Padme. I wish I could have gotten to him sooner," Obi-Wan said.

"You're the reason he's here at all. Because you wouldn't give up until you got into that room. Thank you Obi-Wan," Padme replied.

"Well, we're family after all," Obi-Wan said, as he put a hand on her shoulder. Padme reached for Anakin and she smiled, as she felt him squeeze it.

"It seems he knows you're here," Obi-Wan said.

"You should go home to Lea," Padme told him.

"Are you sure?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Yes, I'm not going anywhere," Padme replied.

"Well, Barriss said that the regenerators should be finished repairing his internal injuries by morning. Then he'll just need a couple hours in the bacta tank for the bruises and external abrasions. He'll be back to his old self by then, so Lea and I will bring the twins

tomorrow afternoon. With any luck, Bant will release him then," Obi-Wan said, with a smile. Padme giggled.

"If he's back to his old self, then she'll have to. Because if she doesn't, he'll just annoy the living daylights out of her until she does," Padme joked. Obi-Wan chuckled.

"Yes, that's our Anakin," Obi-Wan replied.

"Good night Obi-Wan," Padme said.

"Good night Padme. Call us if you need anything," Obi-Wan replied. Padme nodded and watched him leave. She turned back to Anakin and leaned down, pressing her lips to his very softly.

"I love you so much and I don't know what I'd do if I lost you," she said, as she brushed her fingers through his hair. She felt him squeeze her hand again in reassurance.

"He still lives?" the dark voice of his master asked over the holocom on his ship.

"Yes my master. Zana badly injured him, but she toyed with him too long and he killed her. Before I could finish him, Kenobi, Yoda, and Windu interfered," Severus reported.

"I grow tired of our failure," Dooku's voice beamed angrily.

"Forgive me master, I will not fail again," Severus promised.

"No, you won't. Because if you do, I'll kill you myself if the Chosen One doesn't do that for me," Dooku said, as the transmission blinked out. Severus clenched his metal fist angrily.

"Enjoy what little time you have left to live...Skywalker," he growled evilly...

A Period of Leave

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AN: Here's chapter 19! Enjoy and let me know what you think:)

Never Gone II

Chapter 19: A Period of Leave

The next morning, Anakin awoke to a lot of stiffness and a bit of pain. Padme was by his side, as Bant and Barriss removed the regenerators from his skin. After doing a full body scan. Bant determined that the internal bleeding was stopped and the tissue was repaired. The generators had also repaired his lung and mended his ribs. He was still very sore, but immensely better than before. After the body scan, Anakin was placed in the bacta tank to bring down the swelling in his bruises and heal the saber burn on his shoulder. After four hours, he was taken out and he felt considerably better. Bant went about checking his vitals, while Padme towel dried his hair and torso.

"Well, it looks like I can give you a clean bill of health," Bant said.

"Great, can I go home?" Anakin asked. Bant looked at him.

"Not that I don't just love it here, but..." Anakin said, with a sheepish smile.

"Don't lie Anakin, you hate the healer's ward and you've not exactly been the model patient," Bant joked.

"I'm a good patient," Anakin argued.

"Good patients don't kick the healer's med droids. The poor thing went flying across the room," Bant said. Padme couldn't suppress a giggle.

"He poked me with that sharp thing in the ribs," Anakin argued. Bant rolled her eyes and chuckled.

"You are such a brat. You can take your brat home anytime, Padme," Bant said, as she left to attend to her duties.

"I was so worried about you," Padme said, as she brushed her fingers through his hair.

"I'm fine, come here," he said, as he pulled her close. Tenderly, he placed a soft, but passionate kiss on her lips.

"Ani...I have the most wonderful news," Padme began.

"What is it, angel?" Anakin asked.

"Ani...I'm pregnant," Padme replied, with a bright smile. Anakin's face lit up with a huge smile.

"Really?" he asked in awe. She nodded. He pulled her into a tight hug.

"Oh, this is wonderful Padme. Have you told the twins yet," he asked.

"No, I wanted us to tell them together," she replied.

"And you wanted to make sure they didn't blab it to me before you got the chance to tell me," he said.

"That too," she replied.

"With everything that's been happening, this is just the best news I could have ever hope for," Padme said.

"Me too. Another sweet, beautiful baby," Anakin replied. Padme leaned in and kissed him passionately.

"I'm sorry if I'm interrupting," Barriss said.

"Not at all Barriss," Anakin said.

"I thought since you're both here, we could go ahead and do the first ultra sound, if you would like to," Barriss said. Anakin and Padme exchanged an excited glance.

"Definitely. Trade me places?" she asked. Anakin smiled and hopped down from the med table, before helping her up onto it. She laid back and lifted her shirt up, revealing her still flat stomach with a small swell to it. Barriss started the procedure. Several minutes later, a blurry image appeared on Barriss' small screen. Barriss began taking vitals and measurements, while Anakin and Padme looked at the screen, trying to discern the shadowy image.

"I think...I think I see the baby. It's so small," Anakin said.

"Well, it is slightly early for this since Padme is only about three months along. But the baby's vitals are strong and it appears to be healthy. It looks like my database has also been able to determine the sex already. Would you like to know?" Barriss asked. Anakin and Padme looked at each other and then nodded yes.

"You're going to have a beautiful baby girl," Barriss announced. Anakin wrapped his arms around her and kissed her forehead.

"Another baby girl, as beautiful as her mother," Anakin said.

"Another baby girl that will have you wrapped around her finger," Padme replied, with a warm smile.

"Now, I think there's something you both should discuss," Barriss said.

"What is it?" Padme asked.

"Padme, the baby is healthy. But stress and anxiety can put a heavy strain on a pregnancy. It can cause a miscarriage or late in the pregnancy it could cause premature labor. I just don't want to see

you and Anakin lose the baby, especially because of this monster," Barriss said.

"What do you suggest Barriss? We'll follow your recommendation, especially if you think the baby is in danger," Anakin said.

"I suggest that Lea take your post temporarily and you take an extended maternity leave for eight months. Chancellor Organa should have no problem, given the circumstances. I would like you out of the public eye during this time. Your home in the lake country is very secluded, right?" Barriss asked. Anakin nodded.

"Yes and security is very tight. There is a very short list of people who are allowed in the vicinity," Anakin said.

"But what about Anakin? He's needed here," Padme said.

"Naboo is only a four hour trip in hyperspace, correct?" Barriss asked. They nodded.

"Well, Anakin can come here for a few days when we need him. Then, he can travel home for a few days to see you and the children," Barriss suggested.

"I'll do anything to keep my family safe," Anakin replied.

"This will be the best way to ensure Padme has a smooth pregnancy," Barriss said.

"We can stop by and see the Chancellor on our way home. Do you feel up to it, Ani?" Padme asked. He smiled and kissed her cheek.

"I'm fine. Besides, that's supposed to be my question to you," Anakin replied.

"I'm fine too," Padme said, as she grabbed her cloak. Anakin helped her into it, before he put his own on. Together, they left the KGR headquarters to see the Chancellor.

Construction and repair equipment filled the atrium of the Senate building already. Repair droids went about repairing the damage and constructing a new pillar for the one that fell. Anakin and Padme arrived at the lift and took it up to the Chancellor's office. The Chancellor's secretary informed him of their arrival and they were immediately admitted.

"Welcome, both of you. I'm glad to see you've recovered so quickly Anakin. You gave us quite a scare," Bail said. Palo plastered a fake smile on his face and nodded as well.

"Thank you Chancellor," Anakin replied.

"Please sit," Bail offered. Anakin and Padme accepted and sat down.

"Is there something you need to discuss with me?" Bail asked.

"Yes there is Bail. I need to request an eight month leave. During this time, Lea Kenobi will be filling my post," Padme said.

"May I ask why such a long period of time?" Bail asked.

"Anakin and I are expecting," Padme said, with a smile. Bail smiled brightly.

"This is wonderful! Congratulations to you both!" Bail said.

"Yes, congratulations," Palo said, all while secretly seething inside.

"Thank you. I know that it is a lot of time to ask off, but Healer Offee feels that all the extra stress and anxiety I've had lately, it could affect my and the baby's health. With me nearing my second trimester already, it's best that I take myself out of the public eye until after the baby is born," Padme said.

"Say no more Padme. Your baby's health, as well as your own must be a first priority. Not to mention your safety as well. I'm sure Lea can

handle your post with minimal difficulties. You must promise me one thing, though," Bail said.

"What is that?" Padme asked.

"You invite me over to see the newest Skywalker when you return," Bail said, with a pleasant smile.

"The day we get back, consider yourself and your family invited over for dinner," Anakin said.

"Excellent. Well, I suppose this is goodbye for a while, milady," Bail said.

"Thank you for being so understanding Bail," Padme replied.

"Nonsense Padme. You and Anakin have been tireless servants to this Republic. Please take care, both of you," Bail said.

"We will. Thank you Bail," Anakin replied, as they left.

"Daddy! Daddy!" Luke and Leia called, as they spotted their father and mother's speeder land on the veranda. Anakin knelt down and scooped them up, hugging them both tightly.

"We missed you daddy. We were worried," Leia said.

"I'm fine princess. You know I'm always going to come home to you little womp rats," Anakin said.

"Told ya dad would beat the Sith Lord," Luke boasted.

"Did not."

"Did too."

"Did not."

"Did too."

"Did not."

"Did too."

"All right you two, that's enough arguing," Padme said.

"Mommy and I have something very important to tell you," Anakin said, as he sat them both on the love seat.

"Is it good news daddy? Leia asked.

"It sure is princess. Mommy is going to have a baby," Anakin said.

"We're gonna have a baby brother or sister?" Luke asked.

"Actually, you're going to have a baby sister," Anakin answered.

"How do you know it's going to be a girl?" Leia asked.

"Mommy and daddy saw Healer Offee and she took pictures of the baby inside mommy with a big machine," Padme answered.

"Is the baby inside your tummy, mommy?" Luke asked.

"Yes she is, sweetheart," Padme answered.

"How did the baby get in your tummy?" Leia asked. Anakin nearly choked and was reduced to a coughing fit. Padme giggled, knowing those were the last words Anakin wanted to hear coming out of his baby girl's mouth.

"You'll learn about that kind of thing when you're older," Padme answered.

"Yeah, older...much much older. Or how about never," Anakin mumbled.

"Anakin," Padme scolded. She truly felt bad for any future suitors that Leia or their unborn daughter for that matter, would have.

"I'm gonna be the bestest big brother ever!" Luke announced.

"You're both going to be a great big brother and big sister," Obi-Wan said, as he and Lea entered.

"Congratulations to you both," Obi-Wan said.

"Thanks Obi-Wan," Anakin replied.

"Dinner will be ready soon," Lea said, as she shifted Jeena on her hip.

"Okay, why don't you two go wash up," Padme told the twins. The five-year-olds rushed to the fresher to do as their mother asked.

"So, did you have an ultrasound?" Lea asked.

"Yes, the baby is healthy and we're having a little girl," Padme announced.

"I'm so happy for you both," Lea said.

"Thanks. Actually, we need to talk to you both about something," Padme said. Obi-Wan and Lea listened.

"Barriss wants me take an eight month leave. Six months off to finish the pregnancy, and two months off after the baby is born. Lea, I need to ask you to fill my post. I hate to, but Barriss thinks this is the best thing for the baby and I," Padme said.

"I'll be happy to fill your post Padme. And I couldn't agree more with Barriss. All this stress can be harmful to the baby," Lea said.

"Padme and the twins are going home to Naboo and I'll be traveling back and forth, so I can handle my duties here and be at home with them some of the time," Anakin said.

"We think it's the best thing for you. And who knows? Maybe your absence will deter this man and his obsession with you," Lea said optimistically.

"I hope you're right, Lea," Padme said. Anakin stepped away to the veranda and sighed deeply.

"What is it?" Obi-Wan asked.

"I wish Lea was right. But you and I both know that sending Padme into hiding will only make this man more angry and determined. And when she returns, he'll begin tormenting her again," Anakin said.

"And we'll be ready for him and anything the Sith throw at us," Obi-Wan replied.

"Will we? I let Padme think I can handle anything. But what if I can't? They almost had me and you're the only reason I'm still here. She broke through my Force shield and she assured me that Dooku and the rest of his apprentices' could too," Anakin lamented.

"Anakin, you must not dwell on the past. Your focus must be on the here and now. Master Yoda and Master Windu want you to train with them," Obi-Wan said.

"Really?" Anakin asked.

"Anakin, we all know that you have the best chance of defeating the Sith, especially Dooku. You are very powerful, but you still have much unexplored potential. I've taught you all I can. But you could learn much from Yoda and Mace," Obi-Wan said.

"When do I start?" Anakin asked.

"Tomorrow morning at five a.m. in Master Yoda's meditation room," Obi-Wan answered. Anakin groaned.

"Doesn't he sleep?" Anakin joked.

"I'm not really sure, but he's always up by at least four a.m.," Obi-Wan replied.

"Well, I will do anything for my family, so I'll be there," Anakin replied.

"And I as well," Obi-Wan said.

"You're going to train too?" Anakin asked.

"Well, you didn't really expect to take them all on alone, did you?" Obi-Wan asked. He smiled.

"Thanks Ben," Anakin said. Obi-Wan patted his shoulder. They heard Lea calling them for dinner and they retreated inside. They sat down with their family, including Han, and enjoyed good food and the company of each other.

Later, after the twins were in bed and Padme was relaxing in a bubble bath, Anakin talked to Han.

"Somethin' important you wanted to talk to me about?" Han asked.

"Yes Han. Padme and I want to hire you for security detail," Anakin said.

"Hire me?" Han asked in surprise.

"You'll fly back and forth with me and attend what classes you need to. Then, you'll spend the rest of the time on Naboo with us. You'll also be training as a pilot one on one with me to and from Coruscant and Naboo," Anakin said.

"But why me?" Han asked.

"Well for many reasons Han. I have to be really careful who I let near my family these days. Besides Captain Typho, you're the only security person that Padme and the twins are completely comfortably with. Plus, you have the most potential as a pilot of all

my students and I really would like to help you hone that potential," Anakin said.

"You serious?" Han asked.

"Don't sell yourself short Han. You do have great potential. You're not a bad kid and the tough guy act doesn't fool me. You've just not had the best role model. You remind me a lot of myself when I was your age," Anakin replied, with a half smile.

"Well, then I guess I accept the job. And...I guess thanks for believin' in me. I'm still not sure why you do," Han replied.

"You're a good kid Han and I trust you. I'll see you tomorrow," Anakin said.

"Good night," Han said, as he headed for one of the guest room, which was quickly becoming his own.

"Night Han," Anakin replied.

As Anakin entered the bedroom, he tossed his leather jerkin aside, followed by his tunic. His utility belt and pants were next, as he slipped on his sleep pants and placed his light saber on the bedside table. Padme sat at her vanity, dressed in a long white nightgown, brushing her hair and humming. He smiled at her and came up behind her. He leaned over and softly kissed her cheek. She smiled and turned her head to him. Their lips met tenderly and Padme tilted her head, so he could deepen the kiss. Anakin smiled, as he broke the kiss. They got into bed and snuggled close, reveling in the feel of being in each other's arms.

"You're quiet. Are you okay?" she asked. He nodded.

"Sometimes, there just aren't words that can express how much I love you," Anakin replied. She smiled.

"You're sweet. And I love you too," she replied, as she kissed him softly. She looked thoughtful for a moment and then smiled again.

"What is it?" Anakin asked.

"I think I know what I want to call our newest little angel," Padme replied.

"You thought of a name already?" he asked. She nodded.

"Well? Don't keep me in suspense," he jabbed.

"Anna," she said.

"It's beautiful. And...it sounds a lot like my name," Anakin replied. She smiled.

"I know. That's why I chose it," she replied.

"Anna Skywalker...it's perfect. You hear that, little angel? You have a name now," he said, as he placed his hand on her belly. Padme smiled warmly at him.

"Goodnight angel," Anakin said.

"Goodnight Ani," she replied, as together, they slowly drifted off to sleep entwined in each other's arms.

The next afternoon, after Anakin returned from an intense training session with Mace and Yoda, the Skywalker family began loading their family cruiser for home. The Chancellor had issued a statement that Padme would be taking an extended leave, as he was required to and Holonet reporters had swarmed their building. Han's father was away on Corellia, so Han was spared the task of having to explain his new job to his father, at least for the moment.

"Well, I guess this is goodbye for a while," Lea said sadly. Padme hugged her.

"You'll be coming home to visit in a couple weeks," Padme told her.

"I know. I'm just so used to having you all around. But I'm sure the Senate will keep me plenty busy," Lea said.

"I'll see you in a few days Anakin," Obi-Wan said. Anakin nodded, as ushered the twins onto the ship.

"Oh, I do hope it is a smooth flight," Threepio complained, as he followed the children. Artoo rolled behind him and muttered a string of clicks and beeps.

"You rude little scrap pile! I am not a useless chatter box. I'll have you know that I'm far more useful than you are, you little rust bucket!" Threepio said crossly.

"Ah geez, move it along goldenrod! I ain't got all day. If ya don't want to end up as a pile of junk, then I suggest you move it!" Han said irritably, as he followed the droids.

"There are no need for threats Mister Solo," Threepio replied. Anakin chuckled, as he and Padme said their final goodbye to the Kenobi family and boarded the ship.

"Ready to go home, angel?" he asked.

"More than ever. Take us home, my love," she said, as she kissed him passionately.

"Anything for you angel," he replied. The ramp lifted and a few minutes later, the Sapphire Angel left Coruscant's orbit, headed for the lush, green world of Naboo...

Ominous Calm

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars.

AN: Here's chapter 20! Thanks for all the great reviews everyone! Also, this chapter picks up eight months after chapter 19. :)

Never Gone II

Chapter 20: Ominous Calm

Anakin stared contentedly out over the lake. He was standing on the balcony outside his and Padme's bedroom at Varykino. He was performing his morning meditation and feeling the many tremors in the Force around him. He smiled, as he felt the peaceful tremors from his sleeping twins. He felt the peaceful, familiar tremor of his beautiful wife, who he sensed was awake and tending to the newest tremor he felt around him. He still sensed the dark tremors in the Force and knew they were out there. Much had happened in the last eight months, but they had not seen nor heard from any Sith. He knew that meant they were planning something big. It was not a question if they would appear again, but when. In the last eight months, he'd been traveling back and forth between Coruscant and Naboo. Just a few months after Padme had taken leave, repairs to the Jedi Temple began. The Jedi and the Knights of the Galactic Republic finally merged and were now known as the Jedi Knights of the Galactic Republic. The temple went back to being the primary housing and training facility for younglings and padawans. The KGR headquarters was now mainly used for meetings and a training facility also. Since it was so close to the Senate, several Knights and Masters resided there. The Jedi were no longer isolated in their Temple. In the last several months, he'd been training hard with Master Yoda and Master Windu, learning all that he could. Anakin felt an ominous calm in the Force, signifying to him that the storm was about to begin. He knew the Sith were planning something big...he just had no idea what. The Holonet had been hounding him more

than usual. The last few months, they had been trying to learn anything about his wife, who he'd carefully tucked away out of the public eye. They'd been especially intrusive since Anna had been born, begging him for any information about the newest Skywalker bundle. He didn't understand why they were so interested in their personal lives, but he'd done his best to keep them at bay and shield his family from them. As the sun rose over the horizon, he could see reporters already camped out as close to Varykino as security would allow. Today, they would all return to Coruscant and Padme would resume her duties as Senator in just a few days. He smiled, as he heard his wife step out onto the balcony with their cooing daughter. Anna had just discovered her voice and was not shy about using it. He turned and smiled at her. She was truly a vision of beauty, even at this early hour with their daughter in her arms.

"Good morning, Ani," Padme said, as she kissed him softly.

"Good morning indeed," he replied, as he kissed her again. Anna voiced her opinion about being ignored by her parents with a yell.

"Good morning to you too, little angel," Anakin said, as he kissed her head. She had his blue eyes and very fine blonde fuzz on her head. Despite having his coloring, he knew she'd have her mother's beautiful features.

"Why don't you go ahead and clean up. I'll take her for a while," Anakin said. Padme kissed Anna's head and handed her to him, before going back inside. Anakin held his little girl and fondly remembered the night they welcomed her into the world.

Flashback...Two months ago...

Anakin and Han hopped off the ferry and ran toward the house as fast as they could. He'd got the urgent call four hours ago that Padme's water had broke, two days earlier than the healer expected. He and Han had pushed the Sapphire Angel to new speed records,

as they made the journey back to Naboo in just over three hours. As Anakin entered, the twins ran to him.

"We missed you daddy," Leia said.

"I missed you guys too," Anakin replied, as he hugged them quickly.

"Stay here with Han," he told them, as he headed for the bedroom. As he entered, Jobal and Shmi hugged him.

"You're just in time. She's fully dilated now," Jobal said. Anakin nodded, as he stepped to his wife's side," Sola and Beru were there too and they flashed him smiles.

"Hi angel," Anakin said, as he swabbed her sweaty forehead with a towel.

"I didn't...want her to come...until you got here," Padme panted. Her face contorted in pain, as another contraction washed through her.

"Well, I'm here now, so I think it's time," Anakin replied.

"He's right Senator on your next contraction. I want you to begin pushing," the healer said. Anakin gripped her hand tightly, as the next contraction came.

"Push angel," Anakin coached. Padme screamed, as she pushed.

"The head is crowning," the healer said, as Padme heaved air into her lungs.

"You're doing great, angel," Anakin said, as he kissed her sweaty forehead.

"Now Senator, push!" the healer instructed. Padme gritted her teeth and pushed the head out. Padme screamed and laid back.

"Oh, I'm so tired," Padme whimpered.

"I know angel, just one more push and it'll be over," Anakin comforted her.

"Your husband is right. One more big push," the healer said. Padme gritted her teeth and screamed, as she pushed again. A cry pierced the air, as the healer held the quivering baby. She was washed off and wrapped in a blanket, before she was placed in Padme's arms.

"Oh Ani, she's beautiful," Padme said. The baby had stopped crying and now was staring up at her parents.

"Hello Anna," Anakin said, as he touched her life force through the Force. Anakin smiled, as she stared up at them. He leaned over and gently kissed her head, before leaning down and kissing Padme's lips.

"We make pretty babies, angel," he said.

"Yes we do. Do you want to hold her?" Padme asked. He nodded eagerly, as she carefully placed her in his arms.

"Hello little angel. I'm your daddy," Anakin told her, as they stared at each other for the longest time...

End Flashback ...

Anakin smiled at the memory, as Anna babbled incoherently. Anakin took her inside and headed for the kitchen.

"Morning daddy," Leia greeted, as she looked up from her breakfast. Thanks to Dorme, the twins were already eating.

"Morning dad," Luke called, with his mouth full.

"Morning princess. And morning little man, but don't talk with your mouth full," Anakin replied Anna grinned, as she spotted the twins. She was already very fond of her big brother and big sister, and they

were very fond of her as well. Han walked in with a cloth sack full of supplies.

"I went in early and to the supplies Miss Padme asked for," Han said, as he set the bag down

"Thanks Han, but we didn't expect you to go so early," Anakin said gratefully.

"Well, I thought I'd try to go and get back before the holo vultures showed up, but no such luck," Han replied.

"Yeah, they know we're going back today. They're going to try and get a glimpse of Anna," Anakin replied.

"I practically had to fight them off with a stick. They were askin' all kinds of crazy questions," Han said.

"Those are gossip reporters for you," Anakin replied.

"Yeah, well I still say the word gossip reporter should be synonymous with Tatooinian vulture," Han joked and Anakin chuckled.

"I agree," he replied.

"What's a vulture?" Leia asked. Luke looked at her slyly.

"It's a big bird with really sharp talons and a curved beak. They live in the desert and swoop down on dead people and animals. They rip them to pieces and eat them!" Luke dramatized.

"Ewwww! Daddy, tell Lukie to stop!" Leia whined, as he brother made scary noises and faces.

"Luke...don't scare your sister," Anakin warmed sternly. Luke obeyed and went back to eating.

Later that day, the Skywalker family headed for the ferry that would take them back to Theed. Holonet reporters fired their questions, asking to get a look at the baby and asking her name. But Padme kept Anna covered with a blanket, not yet ready to expose her. Anakin ushered his family onto the ferry, while Han and Captain Typho kept the reporters back, as best they could. Very soon, the Skywalker family arrived in Theed and were soon aboard their ship en route to Coruscant...

He entered the secret room in his office and turned the holoscreen on. There she was. The first images he'd seen of her in eight months. He glared at the covered bundle in her arms and the man that was keeping him away from her. But now she was returning...and she would be his at last. Palo poured himself a glass of Corellian scotch and downed the liquid. He stared at one of his many paintings he'd done of her lovely visage and stroked her face.

"Soon my rose...soon I'll take you away from here and all these people that are keeping you away from me. You'll finally be mine..." Palo ranted, as more of the stinging liquid burned its way down his throat.

"And you...you will die! You won't keep her from me any longer! I hate you!" Palo said angrily, as he threw the glass at one of the many holonet pictures that had been taken of him...

Lea went about preparing for dinner that night. Anakin and Padme were returning. And the Chancellor and his family were coming to see the new baby. She rested her hand fondly on her swelled belly. She was five months along now and little Anna Skywalker would soon have a best friend. She smiled, remembering the romantic night their second child had been conceived...

Five months earlier...

Obi-Wan entered the bedroom. He'd been overseeing a criminal trial and today the jury had gone into deliberation. He had been required to guard them until they adjourned for the evening, which was not until nine o'clock. He'd kissed Jeena goodnight, even though she was already asleep and headed for the bedroom.

He plopped down on the and began undressing, as Lea exited the fresher in her robe.

"I'm sorry I'm so late, love," Obi-Wan said.

"No apologies. I know it couldn't be helped," Lea said, as she walked around to her side of the bed. She shed her robe, as his back was turned to her, revealing that she was dressing in a barely there, black negligee. She climbed onto the bed and wrapped her arms around his shoulder. She helped him get his tunic off and began kissing his neck and bare shoulders.

"Oh darling, that feels wonderful," Obi-Wan said.

"Well, why don't you lay back and I'll make you feel even better," she replied seductively. He did so and his beautiful wife straddled his hips. Her risque attire made his blood boil with desire.

"See something you like, my love?" she teased, returning his lustful stare, as she unbuckled his pants.

"Very much so," he rasped.The fires of their passion consumed them and they made love...

End Flashback

Lea smiled slyly at the memory of that night. She heard Obi-Wan's speeder on the veranda and she went to greet him. She'd needed a couple hours to get things ready and he'd taken Jeena to the temple to show her off to everyone. As she approached the veranda, she

saw Jeena bound toward her. She opened her arms and picked up the three-year-old.

"Hi mommy!" Jeena greeted energetically.

"Hi baby. Did you have fun at the Temple with daddy?" Lea asked.

"Uh huh. I got to do a practice saber class with Master Yoda and he said I did good!" Jeena said.

"Oh...that's great sweetie," Lea said, looking a little nervous.

"Can I go play?" she asked.

"Sure honey," Lea said, as she let her down. Her husband came up to her and greeted her with a kiss," Obi-Wan chuckled.

"Don't worry love, she was in no danger. Anakin and I started the twins on the very basics at her age. I'd never let anything happen to her," Obi-Wan said.

"I know Ben. But it's a mother's duty to worry. Was she a big hit?" Lea asked.

"Oh yes. Shaak Ti took her to see the gardens. And Aayla and Kit took her to the room of a thousand fountains. Master Yoda told her stories. They all had as much fun as she did," Obi-Wan replied, as he rested his hand on her swelled belly. He kissed her passionately and she wrapped her arms around his neck, deepening the kiss. They were interrupted, however, by Obi-Wan beeping comlink.

"Bloody timing. That'll be Anakin, we'd better get down to the landing pad," Obi-Wan said.

"We'll continue this later tonight," Lea said sultrily.

"I'll hold you to that, my love," Obi-Wan replied.

"Jeena, come on!" Lea called. Jeena ran out and taking her parents hands, they headed for the lift.

"Aunt Lea! Uncle Ben!" Luke and Leia called, as they hugged their aunt and uncle. The twins spotted Jeena and the three children embraced. Padme stepped down the ramp with Anna, who she had dressed in a darling little lavender dress.

"Oh we've missed you all," Lea said, as the four adults exchanged hugs.

"Oh, she's beautiful. Can I?" Lea asked, referring to Anna.

"Of course," Padme said, as she handed the baby to Lea.

"Well, I think we should go upstairs, before the Holonet hounds get past security and are all over us," Obi-Wan said.

"I agree," Anakin said, as they headed for the lift.

Later that evening, Lea answered the door as it chimed.

"Good evening Chancellor, your majesty," Lea greeted.

"Hello Lea," Bail greeted.

"Good evening to you too Lea, but please call me Breha," the queen said.

"Come in," Lea said.

"Well there she is," Bail said, as he and Breha sat down.

"She's beautiful. What did you name her again?" Breha asked, as she held Kira on her lap.

"Anna Skywalker," Anakin said proudly.

"Mama, can I go play?" Kira asked.

"Sure sweetheart," Breha answered.

"The twins and Jeena are in Leia's room," Padme told her, as the little girl trotted off to play.

"Would you like to hold her?" Padme asked.

"Oh yes," Breha said, as Padme carefully handed her over. Bail's family enjoyed dinner and desert with the Skywalker's and Kenobi's and soon, the hour grew late. The Organa family bid them goodnight and left for home. Obi-Wan and Lea rounded Jeena up and left for their own apartment down the hall.

Anakin stepped into the bedroom later where Padme was feeding Anna.

"Are the twins asleep?" Padme asked.

"Soundly. They played hard tonight," Anakin replied, as he watched his wife hold their baby to her chest.

"Our littlest one is fighting sleep a bit," Padme said, as she pulled her upright and began rubbing her back to burp her.

"Well, she had a busy day too, didn't you little angel," Anakin said, as he smiled at her. Padme giggled and shook her head.

"And I thought Leia had you wrapped around her finger," Padme said.

"She does...you all do, because there is nothing I wouldn't do for my family," he replied, as he kissed her passionately.

"You're worried, I can tell. What is it?" she asked. Knowing that it would be fruitless to try to hide anything, he told her.

"The dark tremors I've been sensing are getting stronger and I know that means something big is on the horizon. The Force has a very ominous calm to it, like we're about to enter a storm. I'm mostly worried about you though," Anakin replied.

"I'm going to be fine, Ani. Sooner or later, this man is going to slip up and leave a clue. You'll find him and put him in prison where he belongs," Padme replied.

"I hope so," he said. Anna had long ago burped and was now fast asleep. Padme laid her down in the bassinet next to their bed, before she and Anakin climbed in to their bed.

"Good night angel," Anakin said, as he kissed her tenderly.

"Good night Ani. I love you," Padme replied, as she snuggled against his chest.

"I love you too," he replied, as they slowly drifted to sleep.

"Progress report Malina," Dooku's voice boomed.

"Weapons are ninety percent operational master. The droids are completing the final structural work. By the time you return, weapons should be at one hundred percent," Malina reported.

"Excellent. I am returning from Korriban as we speak. The time has come Malina. Wait for my return and we shall begin the destruction of the Republic," Dooku said.

"Yes my master," she replied evilly, as the transmission went dark...

The Storm Begins

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars.

AN: Here's chapter 21! Enjoy and let me know what you think!

Never Gone II

Chapter 21: The Storm Begins

Anakin woke up to the soft cooing of his daughter. He heard her whimper and he pulled back the covers, but not before he kissed Padme's cheek.

"Ani...I'll get her," Padme said groggily.

"No, I've got her. Go back to sleep angel," he replied, as slipped on his pajama top, leaving it open.

"Hey little angel," Aakin said, as he lifted his daughter into his arms. He kissed her cheek and quietly left the bedroom. Anakin got her a bottle and began feeding her. He watched Anna with a smile, as she ate hungrily.

"You definitely inherited my appetite, didn't you sweetheart," Anakin said. A while later, as he was burping her, Padme padded out onto the veranda to join them. She kissed Anakin's cheek and Anna's forehead and snuggled against her husband's side, as they watched the sunrise. As beautiful as it was, he could not ignore the prominent, dark tremors that vibrated through the Force.

Something big...something terrible was going to happen.

"The Senate doesn't reconvene until tomorrow. Are you sure you need to go in?" he asked.

"I'm only going into my office to catch up on a little paperwork for a few hours. You'll only be barely two minutes away with your classes," Padme replied. He sighed. He knew he couldn't talk her out of it, especially since he had no concrete reason for her not to go. If there was trouble, he could get to her fairly quickly whereas if she were here at home, it would be more difficult. He smiled and kissed her softly. Suddenly, he felt a tremor of fear coming from his son, just as Leia ran out to them.

"I think Lukie is having a bad dream," she told her parents.

"Uh oh...I'll handle this one," Anakin said, as he handed Anakin to her mother and headed for Luke's room.

Luke was very confused at what he was seeing before him. It kind of looked like a planet, but it was all gray. It had no water and land like Naboo. And it had no buildings like Coruscant. Suddenly, that image faded and Luke found himself standing in a long hallway. He jumped, startled, as he heard a woman scream.

" *Anakin...help me please!" the voice screamed.*

" *Mommy?!" Luke called. It was mommy...and she was really scared. The bad man was hurting her...*

" *Mommy, where are you?!" Luke called, as he ran through the halls. He sensed daddy too...and he was fighting a bad person, so he couldn't get to mommy.*

" *Mommy!" Luke called, as he heard her cries and sobs. He began to panic, as the hall seemed to go on forever.*

" *Mommy! Daddy! Where are you?!" he cried.*

Anakin entered his son's bedroom and saw his boy crying and tossing about in his sleep.

"Mommy! Daddy! Where are you?" he cried in his sleep.

"Luke, Luke...wake up," Anakin said, as he shook his son awake. Luke's eyes shot open and his little chest heaved air into his lungs. His hair was drenched with sweat and his face was stained with tears.

"Hey, what's the matter little man?" Anakin asked, as he pulled his son into his arms.

"I had a nightmare daddy and it felt real," Luke said.

"What did you see?" Anakin asked.

"Well...first I saw this big thing that kind of looked like a planet, but it was all smooth and gray," Luke tried to explain.

"What else did you see?" Anakin asked.

"Well, I think I was on the planet after that. I was in a really long hallway that seemed to go forever! Then I heard mommy calling for you. She was crying and sounded really scared. I think the bad man had her and I tried to find her, but I couldn't. I couldn't find you either, but I could sense that you were fighting the bad people too," Luke whimpered.

"Shh...it's okay Luke. It was just a dream. Mommy and I are both fine," Anakin promised, as he hugged his son tightly.

"Everything's going to be okay, Luke. Now, why don't we go give mommy a big hug and then get some breakfast," Anakin said.

"Yeah!" Luke said, as Anakin put him down. He went scampering off toward the kitchen.

Anna was in her high chair and Leia was already sitting at the breakfast table when Luke came in.

"There's my handsome boy," Padme said, as she knelt down and enveloped him in a hug. She felt Luke hug her tightly.

"Are you okay, baby?" she asked. He nodded.

"Daddy says it was just a dream," Luke said, as he kissed her cheek and hopped up to the table next to Leia. She felt Anakin's arms wrap around her waist. She turned in his embrace and he planted his lips on hers in a passionate kiss.

"Was it just a dream?" she asked, wondering if Luke was instead having a premonition.

"I hope so," he replied, as they looked over at their three children.

"I'll tell you about it later. I need to get to the Temple for sparring. I'll see you later," Anakin said, as he kissed her softly, before kissing each of his children.

"Bye sweetheart," Padme said.

"Bye daddy!" the twins called. He smiled at them, before he headed for his speeder.

Padme and Lea spent the morning together after the twins had gone to school. Jeena was playing quietly and Padme held Anna in her lap, preparing to part herself from her baby for the first time since she'd been born. She knew it would only be for a few hours, but she was having trouble letting go. She had the same trouble when she'd gone back to work after the twins were born.

"Mommy won't be gone long. I'll miss you sweetheart," Padme said, as she kissed Anna's head and cuddled her close.

"She'll be fine. She's not going to forget you," Lea assured her, laughing at her cousin's antics.

"I know. Maybe I should just take her with me," Padme fretted.

"You could, but do you remember what happened the time you took the twins with you when they were babies?" Lea asked.

"I didn't get anything done and spent the entire time showing them off to everyone. But I did promise to bring her in," Padme said.

"Tell you what. You go in for a couple hours and get some things done. And then I'll bring her in and you can show her off to everyone then," Lea suggested.

"Okay. Mommy will see you soon, angel," Padme said, as she handed Anna to Lea. A few minutes later, she left for the Senate building.

The military base on Corellia was buzzing wiht life. Soldiers ran about and readying their star fighters. A very large and strange object had just passed the military check points and entered Corellian space.

"General Solo, we have a visual on the object from one of he check points," a soldier saluted and handed the datapad to him.

"Thank you private," General Solo said, as he switched it on. A hologram of the spherical shaped object popped up into view.

"What in blazes is that thing?" the General asked.

"We don't know sir, but it is the size of a small moon. It is approaching the planet and we believe it may be hostile, as they will not answer our hails. We await your orders sir," the General's second in command

"Red Alert. Dispatch all squadrons. Let's blow this thing out of the sky," the General ordered.

"Yes General!" the officer called.

Several squadrons approached the unidentified vessel and after a final attempt to contact those inside, the squadron leaders ordered the attack. They descended upon the vessel, firing laser blasts. Alarm and disbelief extended through the ranks, as not one blast even scratched the surface of the structure. Inside, from the bridge, Count Dooku watched with pride, as all his years of planning began to pay off. This was the beginning of the end for the Republic...and the Jedi Knights.

"Destroy them," Dooku ordered. The droids at the weapons station responded with a simple "yes sir" and began firing on the enemy ships. The Death Star's main weapon destroyed the bigger targets, while buzz droids were released to take care of the smaller ships. No one was given the time or chance to escape.

"There is an incoming transmission from Severus and Malina. They are in position," Jamilla informed him.

"Put it through," Dooku ordered.

"We await your orders, master," Malina said.

"In a few moments, Corellia will be simply a memory. Severus, you will keep the Chosen One and the Jedi occupied. Malina, you will seize Chancellor Organa and bring him to me," Dooku ordered.

"Master, what of Palo?" Jamilla asked.

"Tell him he make take the Senator while her husband is being distracted by Severus. Tell him there will be a shuttle waiting for him that will bring them here," Dooku said.

"Yes master," Jamilla replied.

"Do not fail me," Dooku told his apprentices.

"We will not, master," they replied, as the transmission went silent.

"You may commence with the destruction, Govenor Tarkin. It's time to show the galaxy the power of this fully armed and operational battle sation. Soon, the whole galaxy will tremble with fear, as we eliminate our adversaries. Then, they shall declare me their Emperor," Dooku said. Tarkin raised the power lever on the weapons console to maximum.

"Fire..." Dooku ordered. Tarkin ignited the power in the main reactor and fired the primary weapon. The blast struck the planet Corellia and it exploded in a brilliant display of fire. Debris was the only thing that remained of the once prosperous and proud Corellia. Dooku smiled in victory.

News of Corellia's destruction would reach Coruscant very soon. And once he defeated the Chosen One, he would kill the Chancellor and take control of the galaxy...

KGR Headquarters...

Obi-Wan and Anakin stopped sparring, as they felt the tremendous disturbance in the Force.

"It's as if suddenly, millions and millions of people cried out in terror, before they were silenced," Obi-Wan said.

"How...how did billions of people...just die like that instantly?" Anakin wondered in horror. Whie and Scout ran frantically into training room.

"Darth Severus is climbing the stairs to the building. He has a droid army with him!" Whie said. Anakin and Obi-Wan drew their light sabers. All Knights and Masters in the building followed Anakin and Obi-Wan. A fierce battle broke out between the Jedi Knights and hundreds of battle droids on the platform near the entrance. Anakin and Obi-Wan's sabers collided with Severus' and the battle began...

While Severus' attack on the KGR headquarers distracted most of the Jedi, Darth Malina marched up the steps to the entrance of the Senate building. The two Jedi Knights at the entrance ignited their blades and tried to stop her from entering. She ignited her blade and shoved it through the heart of one, before she retracted it. The second Knight came at her, blade swinging. She held her hand and out and stopped him with the Force. She brought her blade up mercilessly and beheaded him. She continued on into the building, killing every Knight and guard that tried to stop her...

There was a knock at Padme's office door.

"Come in," she called.

"Good afternoon milady," Palo said, as he entered.

"Hello Palo. Is there something I can do for you?" Padme asked.

"Yes, Chancellor Organa wishes to see you. Allow me to escort you there," Palo said. Padme nodded and stepped out into the hallway with him. She heart the commotion and screaming coming from the atrium.

"Oh no...the Sith. I need to go find Ani," Padme said. Palo raised his blaster to her back and set it to a very low stun.

"You won't be going anywhere...my rose, except with me," Palo said. Padme gasped in horror, as she turned to him. She screamed briefly, before the stun ray hit her. Palo caught her, before she fell to the floor and lifted her into his arms.

"You're mine now...sweet rose," he said, as he carried her off. He was certain that no one had heard her scream over all the commotion. But one young man had heard and he had a bad feeling in the pit of his stomach, as he began searching the vacant hallways...

Malina made quick work of the Chancellor's guards and barged into his office.

"Chancellor Organa, my master requested your presence aboard his Death Star," Malina said. Ki-Adi Mundi and Stass Allie ignited their blades. Malina laughed evilly.

"You foolish Jedi, you are no match for my power!" Malina cackled.

"We shall see, beast!" Stass replied, as they engaged her.

"As much as I would love to toy with you idiots and let you think you actually have a chance against me. I have not the time," Malina said.

"If you want the Chancellor, then you'll have to go through us," Ki-Adi Mundi stated.

"With pleasure, Jedi scum!" Malina growled, as she poured Force lightning into the Cerean Jedi Master. Ki-Adi Mundi was thrown through the expansive window and fell to his death. Shards of glass was whipped around by the wind. Stass Allie forced Chancellor Organa under his desk, protecting him, before she faced the Sith. Stass' blade met Malina's again in a deadlock. Malina snarled evilly, as she pushed Stass back. The Jedi stumbled and Malina brought her blade around, beheading her opponent, before she could recover. Malina extinguished her blade and roughly pulled the Chancellor to his feet. She placed a pair of binders around his wrists and pulled him along.

"Come along, your excellency, my master awaits," Malina said.

Padme was not unconscious for long and she slowly opened her eyes. Her wrists and ankles were bound tightly with twine. She slowly pulled herself up onto her side as best she could and glared angrily at her captor

"You! It's been you the whole time!" she yelled.

"Shh...keep your voice down. I don't want to have to hurt you, my beautiful rose," he said, as he stroked her cheek. She shrugged away in disgust, before finally noticing the room they were in. She looked around in disbelief at the walls that were covered in holos and paintings of her.

"What is this place?" she asked.

"This is my sanctuary...my shrine to you, if you will," he said, as he stroked her face again.

"I've wanted you for so long...and now you're finally mine," Palo said, as he forced his lips onto hers. Padme whimpered and tried to shrug him off, but he held her face steady.

"Anakin will come for me. You'll regret trying to take me from him," Padme warned.

"Master Dooku is counting on him to come after you. A shuttle will be arriving soon to take us away from here. Dooku will kill your husband when he comes and there will be no one to take you from me again..." Palo said.

"Nooo!" Padme cried.

"I don't think so pal," Han said, as he shoved his way into the secret room.

"How did you find us?" Palo asked.

"Thought I heard a scream and I followed my gut. I haven't trusted you from day one. Should have known you were the one stalking Miss Padme. And just wait till Anakin finds out. He's fighting another one of those Sith, but he'll be here soon," Han said.

"Too bad we won't be sticking around. You're a brave boy. Foolish, but brave," Palo said.

"Han, look out!" Padme screamed. But before he could turn, he was knocked out from behind. Captain Panaka confiscated the boy's blaster.

"Don't hurt him. He's just a boy," Padme pleaded.

"Leave him. We'll be long gone before he wakes up and can tell anyone," Palo said, as he pressed a button on the far wall console. A secret exit opened, revealing a landing pad with a small ship waiting.

"Are you coming?" Palo aasked.

"I'll be following you soon. Master Dooku has requested that I bring him the Skywalker children," Panaka said. Padme gasped.

"No...no, please leave my babies alone!" Padme cried. Palo covered her mouth with his hand and began dragging her toward the ship, as she fought him. The secret exit closed behind him, as he dragged Padme onto the ship.

Anakin knew Padme was in trouble. And it was killing him inside that he couldn't get to her. He parried another of Severus' deadly swipes, as their sabers met in a dead lock.

"You're too late. He's already got her," Severus taunted.

"Shut up," Anakin growled.

"He's already leaving the planet with her. He's probably already take her to his bed chambers, thinking about all the things he wants to do to her," Severus taunted.

"Shut up, you bastard!" Anakin screamed, as he slashed furiously at his opponent. Severus laughed evilly and grabbed for Anakin's neck, wrapping his large metal hand around the young man's neck.

"You are pathetic, Chosen One. Your love for that woman has made you weak," Severus said, as he tossed Anakin aside. Obi-Wan met his saber, but Severus knocked him away with his large metal arm. However, he overestimated the time it would take Anakin to recover. He'd been training fiercely since their last battle and Anakin was far from winded. He let Padme's love fill him and sent her a silent promise through the Force that he'd be coming for her. Anakin swept his saber down and around through both of Severus' forearms, ridding him of part of his metal arms. Anakin held his saber to Severus' throat.

"It's over Severus," Anakin declared. Obi-Wan, Mace and Yoda surrounded the Sith.

"You may have captured me. But you'll never defeat Master Dooku and his top apprentice," Severus said.

"Another apprentice?" Mace questioned.

"Yes, she is the one that killed those fools Kuro and Jill. And she is the one that just kidnaped your Chancellor," Severus goaded.

"You are under arrest Jarec," Mace announced, as he and Master Fisto placed a pair of Force binders around what was left of his forearms and led him away.

"Masters, have you heard?" Whie asked, as he and Scout approached them.

"Heard what?" Anakin asked.

"Corellia has been destroyed," Scout answered. Anakin and Obi-Wan exchanged glances.

"That's what we felt earlier," Obi-Wan said.

"How do you just destroy a planet?" Anakin asked.

"A couple pilots escaped. They said it was destroyed by this thing that looked like a small moon with a single blast," Whie said. Anakin's eyes widened.

"Was it smooth looking and gray?" Anakin asked.

"Yes," Scout answered.

"How did you know?" Whie asked.

"Because my son had a dream about it," Anakin replied, as his comlink beeped.

"Skywalker," he answered.

"Anakin, you need to get over here right away. I tried to stop him from taking Miss Padme, but somebody knocked me out from behind," Han said.

"You saw who took her?" Anakin exclaimed.

"Yes sir, it was Palo. It's been him all along, stalking her for years. And I'm standing in front of the proof," Han replied.

"I'll be right there Han," Anakin replied.

"Whie, tell Master Yoda that Obi-Wan an I are going to find Dooku and that monstrosity he built," Anakin said, as they began sprinting toward the Senate building.

Anakin walked furiously toward Palo's office.

"I can't believe it's been Palo this whole time!" Anakin said angrily.

"Anakin, you must calm down," Obi-Wan replied.

"Calm down? That monster has been right in front of us the whole time and I didn't see it!" Anakin yelled.

"Now...Padme is at his mercy," Anakin said, as he forced his anguish back.

"Anakin, none of us saw this. No one would have pegged him as Padme's stalker," Obi-Wan said.

"The twins did, master. They didn't like him from the beginning. But I thought he was harmless," Anakin replied.

"We will get her back," Obi-Wan assured him, as they arrived at Palo's office...

Arrival on the Death Star

Disclaimer: It's George's sandbox. I just play here, because it's fun!

AN: Here's chapter 22! Thanks for all the great reviews. Enjoy!

Never Gone II

Chapter 22: Arrival on the Death Star

Anakin and Obi-Wan entered the vacant office.

"Han?" Anakin called.

"Back here, behind the bookcase!" Han called. Anakin found the secret passageway behind the bookcase and slipped inside with Obi-Wan right behind him.

"I'm sorry, I tried to stop him. But somebody got me from behind," Han said. Anakin put his hand on the boy's shoulder.

"It's okay Han. If it wasn't for you, we still wouldn't know it was Palo," Anakin replied.

"Well, it's definitely him. Looks like he's been obsessed for years. Some of these holos and articles go way back when she was princess of Theed," Han replied. Anakin and Obi-Wan stared at the walls in disbelief. Every article and picture the holonet had ever published about her was there. Then, there were the paintings that hung all around the room. Everyone of them featured his beautiful wife...some more risque than others. Anakin gritted his teeth, trying to push the hot rage he felt burning inside him. He knew it was wrong to hate...but when he got his hands on this sick bastard, he was going to kill him. And he was going to enjoy doing it too. Anakin stormed out of the secret room, with Obi-Wan and Han following him.

"Anakin...wait," Obi-Wan said, urging him to slow down.

"I know it's wrong, you don't have to tell me! But I swear I'm going to kill him when I get my hands on him. He's tormented her for the last time...and if he's touched her, I'll kill him with my bare hands!" Anakin yelled. Suddenly, a wave of pure terror swept through both Anakin and Obi-Wan.

"No...no..." Anakin cried.

"What is it?" Han asked.

"The children...Lea..." Obi-Wan said.

"Han, get the Sapphire Angel ready. We'll be there as soon as possible," Anakin replied, as he and Obi-Wan began running with Force-enhanced speed...

She couldn't help the tears that slipped down her cheeks, as Panaka approached her with his blaster leveled at them. Captain Typho lay on the floor, unconscious and the victim of Panaka's stun ray. At least he had not killed him, that much she was grateful for.

"Please...they're just children. What could you possibly need them for?" Lea asked.

"Master Dooku has ordered that I bring them to him. Now, Mrs. Kenobi, you can either come quietly or you can join Typho. Only this time, my blaster won't be set to just stun," Typho said. Luke and Leia glared up at him with defiance in their eyes, while Jeena sobbed quietly and Anna began wailing at the top of her lungs. Panaka grabbed Lea's arm and began shoving toward his ship on the veranda. Luke and Leia yelled and grabbed onto Panaka's legs, hitting and kicking him. Panaka yelled angrily and knocked Luke away, before shooting him with the stun ray.

"Luke!" Lea called. Leia ran to her twin and tried to shake him awake.

"Wake up Lukie...please!" she cried. Panaka took aim and shot Leia as well.

"You bastard, they're just children!" Lea cried. Panaka picked the children up, carrying one under each arm.

"You had better keep moving, Mrs. Kenobi or I will carry out my earlier threat and use it on you and this time, it will be set to kill," Panaka replied. Lea tried to calm Anna, but the baby was almost inconsolable. Panaka shoved them all into a holding cell on the ship and took them into the sky, just as Anakin and Obi-Wan arrived.

"No...we're too late," Anakin said.

"We'll get them back," Obi-Wan replied. Anakin raised his comlink to his lips.

"Han, bring the Sapphire Angel here to our apartment right away," Anakin said.

"Already on my way," the boy answered.

"Do you think he knows about Corellia and his father yet?" Obi-Wan asked. Anakin sighed.

"If he does, he's not letting on," Anakin replied.

Han sighed, as he piloted the Sapphire Angel toward Republica 500. Indeed, he had heard about Corellia, as Lando had rushed to tell him as soon as he had found out. Han's father, General Solo, and millions of his people had just been killed. He hadn't spoken to his father in months. The last time had been not long after he began his one on one pilot training with Anakin and his security duties to the Skywalker family. Han remembered that conversation very clearly...

Flashback–nearly seven months ago...

The door slid closed behind Han, as he entered the apartment that he shared with his father. He had not been here at all in the last month and had briefly stopped by to pick up a few personal items.

" *Well, well, seems there's a stranger in my apartment," Han suppressed an eye roll.*

" *Hi dad," Han replied.*

" *Where the hell have you been lately, boy?" the General snapped.*

" *I sent you a message and told you over two weeks ago," Han replied.*

" *Oh yes, I remember now. When did it occur to you that you needed to get approval from me?" the General asked.*

" *It didn't. I ain't some little kid anymore," Han said.*

" *Watch your tone, boy. Besides, I'm sure it won't be long until you screw up. You're good at that," the General replied. Han bit back a retort.*

" *Anakin says I'm doing great and so does Miss Padme," Han replied.*

" *Well, I'm going to need you to quit and come back to Corellia with me," the General replied.*

" *I ain't quittin," Han replied.*

" *You are if I say you are!" the General yelled, as he grabbed Han by the collar.*

" *Look, I ain't gonna enlist in yur stupid army so you can push me around the rest of my life!"*

" *So you're going to babysit some spoiled Senator instead?" Han's father yelled.*

" *Don't talk about her like that. She's a nice lady and they've been good to me. Better than you've ever been!" Han retorted. He wasn't surprised when his father gave him split lip and a bloodied mouth. As usual, the General used his fists to take his anger out on Han.*

" *I'm leavin'," Han announced.*

" *If you leave, don't bother comin' back, you ungrateful brat!" his father yelled.*

" *What makes you think I would ever want to..."*

End Flashback...

Those were the last words they ever exchanged. Part of him hated his father, but that didn't mean he wanted him to die. He supposed that was crazy. The man never had a kind word for him or a gentle touch. So, why should he care that he was gone? The General had never, not once, told Han that he loved him. So why did Han love him? He had not the answers for these questions and he had learned that bottling his emotions up would do him no favors. When the time was right, he'd talk to someone. Or more accurately, Anakin or Miss Padme would *make* him talk about it. They had become like family to him...sort of the parents he always wished that he would have had. And now this psycho bastard had the woman who was the closest thing Han had ever had to a mother figure. If Anakin didn't kill him first, then Han planned on taking a few punches at the slimy womp rat himself...

Anakin and Obi-Wan quickly boarded the Sapphire Angel and Han quickly took off.

"Where are the kids?" Han asked.

"Somebody got them. Probably the same person that knocked you out. Set a course for Corellian space," Anakin said.

"Already done," Han said, as he began readying the ship for hyperspace. A few minutes later, the stars began to streak by, as they entered hyperspace, and began the two hour journey to the Corellian system. A system that was now missing its largest and most populated planet.

"Anakin..." Padme whispered, as she slowly came around. As she opened her eyes, she was disturbed by the pair of dark, possessive eyes staring down at her. Padme noticed that her feet were free and that he had replaced the twine around her wrists with shackles.

"We've landed. Let's go," Palo said, as he pulled her along by the arm. He pulled her to the top of the ramp and Padme looked around at the inside of the monstrosity.

"It's beautiful, isn't it? Years of hard work, finally realized," Palo said.

"Why are you doing this? Why are you helping the Sith? People are dying, Palo," Padme said. He looked at her incredulously, as if expected her to know why.

"Why for you of course, my love. You are my reward for helping them bring down the Republic. In exchange, they will rid us of your husband. You're mine now Padme," Padme said, gripping her arm tightly. Padme glared at him.

"I will never be yours! You make me sick! I can't believe you would go along with the Sith and let millions of people die just to fulfill some sick obsession you have with me!" Padme screamed at him, her eyes blazing with fiery defiance. Palo put his finger under her chin and stroked her face with his other hand. She turned her head away defiantly, repulsed by his touch.

"From the day we first met, I've wanted you. I have been able to think of nothing else but making you mine since then. I used to send you love letters when you were queen, anonymously of course," Palo said.

"I used to get a lot of crazy pieces of mail. I just assumed they were from a crazy person. I guess I was right," Padme retorted.

"I wanted to tell you how I felt for years, but I could never get up the courage. Then one day, *he* came into the picture. *He* waltzed in and swept you off your feet like some fairy tale! He stole you from me! You were supposed to be mine!" Palo yelled, as he squeezed her arms.

"You're hurting me," Padme said, pleading for him to let go of her.

"I was in love with you from the moment you kissed me when you just a girl!" Palo screamed.

"You're insane," Padme said, as she continued to wince painfully, as he gripped her arms.

"You made me this way! I loved you and you tossed me aside like garbage for that desert rat! I used to watch you when you were in public and I would become nauseous watching him kiss you!" Palo ranted. Padme was truly scared, more so than she had been in long time. One minute, Palo was calm and the next, he was violent and raving psychotically. She reached out to Anakin with her feelings through the Force, just like he had taught her. Even through they were far apart, he responded almost immediately, sending her his love and strength.

" *I'm always with you angel. I'll be there soon...I love you,"*

" *Your love gives me the strength to hold on. Hurry my love, he is insane and I fear what he may do...I love you too,"*

"I'm sorry that I cannot return your feelings Palo. But since the moment I met Anakin, my heart has belonged to him...and it always will," she replied. The murderous look in his eye seemed to intensify. She yelped painfully, as he slammed her back against one of the walls on the ship.

"You had better get it through that pretty head of yours that you belong to me now," he said, as he held her face only centimeters from his own. Padme whimpered, as he forcefully pressed his lips to hers. She knew she would pay if she did what she was about to do, but she didn't care, for she only wanted his disgusting lips off hers. Palo yelped in pain, as she sunk her teeth into his bottom lip. He pulled away angrily and slapped her face. He would up and backhanded her on the other side of her face, sending her falling to the floor. He yanked her up and put his hand around her neck.

"You'll learn that it is not wise to cross me, my beautiful rose," Palo said, as he released her neck and dragged her down the ramp.

"Well, well, how lovely to see you again, Senator Amidala," Tarkin said.

"General Tarkin, I should have known. I thought I smelled a stench," Padme bit back, as she struggled against Palo's grip.

"As feisty as ever, I see," Tarkin chuckled evilly.

"So nice of you to join us, Senator. Welcome to the Death Star," Dooku said.

"How could you! How could you destroy an entire planet full of innocent lives!" Padme screamed.

"Corellia was just a demonstration of the power I wield. I will continue to exterminate the remaining planets with the largest opposition...starting with Naboo next," Dooku said. Padme's eyes widened in horror.

"No...you can't! Naboo is defenseless!" Padme cried.

"Oh he can and he will," a female voice chimed.

"Jamilla?" Padme asked in disbelief.

"Hello Padme. It's been a long time," Jamilla replied.

"Jamilla...why?" Padme asked in horror.

"Why? Those fools forced me to leave my own planet, because I didn't live up to the reputation of the Great Amidala. I lived in your shadow for my entire two terms as queen and when they exiled me, you did nothing to stop it," Jamilla yelled.

"I tried Jamilla, I really did. But I was outvoted by parliament," Padme replied.

"Please...you were too busy popping out Skywalker's babies to care!" she replied, with disgust. Palo shoved her toward two of Dooku's servant girls.

"Dress her accordingly and then take her to my chambers," Palo ordered, as they dragged Padme away.

Barely an hour later, Panaka arrived carrying Lea and the children. Upon arrival Dooku ordered to see the youngest Skywalker child. Lea fought Jamilla, who was trying to take the baby. Palo hit her with the butt of a blaster and knocked her out. Luke glared up at Palo with a look that was as cold as a Hoth glacier, proving that he was Anakin Skywalker's son to the core.

"You're the bad man that's been trying to hurt my mommy," Luke said.

"Your mommy belongs to me now...and you'll never see her again," Palo said evilly. After Dooku was done taking the baby's midichlorian count, the wailing child was handed back to Jamilla. The former queen held the child with contempt.

"Why won't this blasted child shut up," she growled, as she glared at the unconscious Lea and little Jeena, who was sitting by her mother, crying quietly.

"You're scaring her! She wants mommy! Where is my mommy!" Leia demanded.

"Take the children and the woman to a holding cell with the Chancellor," Dooku ordered.

Bail shot up to his feet, as he heart the commotion. He caught Lea before she hit the floor and laid her down gently. Jamilla snarled at the crying child in her arms and thrust the baby toward Bail, who carefully accepted the tiny child.

"Make it shut up," Jamilla said crossly, as she left. Bail glared at Palo, as he shoved the other three children into the cell.

"I trusted you and you betrayed us!" Bail said. Palo smiled evilly.

"Yes...and thanks to your error in judgement, I have what I want," Palo replied, as he stalked away. Bail cradled Anna and she began to calm down.

"Lukie...I'm scared. What if that bad man hurts mommy?" Leia asked.

"Don't worry, daddy is coming for us. Uncle Obi-Wan too," Luke replied.

"But how will they know where to find us?" Leia asked. Luke shrugged.

"I don't know...he's daddy. He just knows," Luke replied simply.

Padme stood by the bed, in which she was shackled to, and pulled with all her might. The metal cut into her skin and her wrists were bleeding. But she didn't care. Her children were here; she could feel it and she had to get to them. She whimpered painfully, as she pulled and pulled, but it was no use. The servants had dressed her in a

humiliating ensemble that looked like something a pleasure slave or concubine would wear. It was white and the top was cropped just below her bosom, leaving her entire midriff bare. The skirt was uncomfortably short and revealed most of her shapely legs and thighs. She heard Palo come in and she desperately kept trying to free herself. Her blood ran cold, as she felt him grip her arm and turn her around to face him.

"Where are my children? I want to see them," Padme demanded.

"They are fine, I assure you...and you're not going anywhere," Palo replied, as his eyes roamed over her body lustfully. He pulled her against him and she began pushing him away.

"Take your hands off me!" Padme screamed.

"I can't do that. I've waited far too long for this...and I'm finally going to have you..." Palo said, as he shoved her to the bed. Padme struggled to get back up, but he pinned her beneath him and his lips settled on her neck.

"Get off me!" Padme screamed, as she tried pushing him off. She yelped in pain, as he slapped her on either side of her face.

"You're wasting your time resisting me, my love. I'm going to make you mine now," Palo said, as he smothered her lips with his own.

"And if you bite me again, I'll take my anger out on one of your children," Palo replied, as his lips descended on hers again. Tears streamed down her cheeks, as his hands roamed everywhere.

" *Oh Ani...hurry..."*

The Sapphire Angel exited hyperspace and the Death Star loomed before them.

"There it is," Anakin said, from the co-pilot seat. A hatch opened and dozens of buzz droids came out.

"Uh oh, turn over the primary controls to me," Anakin said. Han flipped the switch and gave Anakin control. Obi-Wan's stomach lurched, as Anakin began spiraling around the droids.

"Han, aim for that external control panel. That should force an opening to that docking bay," Anakin said. Han nodded and took aim.

"Fire!" Anakin called. Han did so, hitting it dead on and destroying the Force field. The blast door began to slide closed and Anakin flew in just in time. He dropped the landing gear and slid across the droid filled docking bay, plowing through them until the ship finally came to a stop. The three of them stood up and drew their weapons, ready to work their way through any adversaries. Obi-Wan and Anakin drew their light sabers and fought through the droids. Han blasted the ones he could, as he followed them through the expansive room and into vacant hallways. After trekking through what seemed like miles of hallway, they suddenly came to a halt, as a Red Twi'lek stood before them, dressed in a tight, black body suit. Her red blade blazed to life and the two Jedi Knights stood ready. Han noticed that this hallway verged off in couple different directions.

"I'm going to look for the kids and Miss Padme," Han said.

"Thank you Han. I sense the kids are all right for the time being, but Padme is not. I would be forever grateful to you if you could get to her," Anakin said quietly, so only Han and Obi-Wan could hear him.

"No thanks necessary. She's like the mom I never had and I'll be damned if I'm gonna let that sick bastard hurt her," Han said, as he sprinted off down the hall, hoping to find her soon.

"Let's take this elsewhere," the Sith spoke. Anakin and Obi-Wan were startled, as the floor beneath their feet began to move. The ceiling opened up and the platform shot up and stopped once they reached the bridge and closed underneath them.

"Welcome, Chosen One," Dooku said, as he turned in his chair.

"I've been waiting for this for a very long time..."

Fight On All Fronts

Disclaimer: It's George's sandbox. I just play here.

AN: Here's chapter 23! Thanks for all the great reviews!

Never Gone II

Chapter 23: Fight On All Fronts

Anakin and Obi-Wan ignited their blades, as the Sith Master and his top apprentice glared back at them.

"Your reign of terror ends today, Dooku," Anakin declared.

"We shall see, Chosen One," Dooku said, as Malina stepped forward.

"Today, we spill your blood and my Master's Empire shall rise," Malina said.

"Still obsessed with your plans to bring destruction to the galaxy, I see," Obi-Wan replied.

"Oh no Master Kenobi. I only wish to bring order to a chaotic galaxy," Dooku answered.

"Oh yes, I know all about your methods of forcing marshal law on the people of this galaxy. And I'm well aware of your plans to exterminate those who oppose you. We will not let you succeed," Obi-Wan declared, as he raised his saber. Dooku laughed evilly, as he touched a switch on the arm of his chair. Suddenly, Obi-Wan was surrounded by ray shields.

"I'm sorry old friend, but I cannot have you interfering again," Dooku said.

"You truly are a coward," Obi-Wan spat.

"Call me what you will. But I only wish to see just now good your apprentice really is...without your help. Now, you shall watch the demise of your apprentice...at the hands of my apprentice," Dooku said.

"I already know the outcome and it will not be in your apprentice's favor," Obi-Wan retorted.

"Such faith in your former apprentice is commendable. I just hope that faith is not misplaced," Dooku goaded.

"I assure you it is not," Obi-Wan replied.

"We shall see, Master Kenobi, we shall see," Dooku said, as they watched Anakin and Malina circle each other. With a fierce battle cry, Malina charged at the Chosen One. Their sabers hissed and crackled, as they met again and again in a series of deadly strikes...

Tears streamed down Padme's cheeks, as he forced his lips onto hers again and again. As much trouble as she was in right now, she was still worrying about Anakin. She knew the reason he had not come was because he was facing Dooku and she was deeply scared. She knew her husband was strong and powerful, but the Sith never fought fairly. She gasped in horror, as she felt his hand on her thigh, trying to force her legs apart. She squeezed them together, as tightly as she could.

"Stop fighting me, my love. I promise I'll be gentle," he hissed.

"I'll never submit to you, you sick bastard!" Padme spat.

"Your fire makes me want you even more," he said, as he continued placing kisses all over her bare midriff, inching his way slowly to her chest. Fear gripped her, as his hand slipped beneath her top and settled on one of her breasts. She began sobbing harder than she

had been, as he other hand tried to pry her legs apart again. She had to do something and she had to do it fast.

"No...please stop," she pleaded, but her cries went unheard, as his hands and lips continued their assault on her body. She knew she had to stop him now...or there would be no stopping him.

"I'm not stopping now. I've waited too long for this. I'm finally going to have you, just like in my dreams," Palo said.

"Please...my wrists hurt," Padme whimpered. Palo grit his teeth in annoyance.

"That is your own fault," Palo growled, as his lips returned to their assault on her chest and mid section.

"You're so beautiful. I've imagined your body beneath mine for so long. You taste better than I could have ever imagined," Palo rasped and Padme had to suppress another wave off nausea.

"Please...they really hurt. Don't you have some bacta?" Padme pleaded.

"Shut up!" Palo growled, as he began unbuckling his pants and unbuttoning his shirt.

"Please...the wounds could get infected," Padme pleaded again. Palo slapped her angrily, before getting up and buckling his pants. He undid the shackles on her wrists and examined the angry cuts.

"I'll get you some bacta and then there will be no more resistance. If you continue to fight me or if you move while I'm in the fresher, then one of your children will suffer for it," Palo said, as he went to the fresher to fetch the bacta.

"You're mine Padme...get used to it," he called back.

"Like hell I am," she said quietly to herself, as she crept toward the fresher. She had one chance at this...and one chance only.

Anakin clashed furiously with Malina.

"Your thoughts betray you, Chosen One. Your worry and concern for your wife are distracting you. This is not at all the fight I expected from the almighty Chosen One," she taunted.

"You talk too much," Anakin retorted, as he struck at her in earnest. Their sabers locked in an arc and they fought for control for several minutes. Sweat beaded on Anakin's face, as he fought her. Anakin pushed her up and back flipped away. He regained his footing and charged at her. Malina snarled and met his saber in a series of furious blows and strikes.

"Give up, Chosen One, you're no match for me," Malina snarled.

"I beg to differ," Anakin retorted, as he spun his saber furiously and slipped into Vaapad...just as Master Windu had taught him. Dooku looked a little unsettled by this.

"Yes, Mace taught him Vaapad," Obi-Wan said.

"Quite dangerous, don't you think?" Dooku asked.

"No, you don't have to worry about the dark side. Anakin's love for his family is what keeps him from falling too deep into the technique. Malina fought defensively just to keep up with him and she had no room for any offensive attacks.

"Anakin will defeat your apprentice...and then you'll next, Dooku," Obi-Wan promised...

Padme padded quietly to the fresher with a large vase in her hands. As he came out, Padme broke the large glass vase over his head.

"Ahhhhhrrggghhh...you little bitch!" he screamed in pain, as shards of broken glass cut into his skin. Padme kneed him in the groin and

he doubled over in more pain. She fisted her hands together and hit him hard between his shoulder blades, dropping him to the floor. She ran as fast as she could to the exit and the door slid open. She began running as fast as she could through the hallways, looking for a place to hide until Ani could get to her.

Palo pulled himself up and painfully stumbled toward the door. He had cuts all over his face and neck and blood was running profusely from the wounds.

"WHERE ARE YOU!" Palo screamed, as he stumbled down the hallway.

"I'LL FIND YOU PADME AND YOU'LL BE SORRY WHEN I DO! I TRIED TO BE GENTLE WITH YOU...BUT NOW YOU WILL REGRET FIGHTING ME!" Palo screamed psychotically. Padme hid in a small crevice and tried to call her rapid breathing. She watched Palo storm by and waited until he was out of sight, before she crept out of her hiding place and ran the other way. Padme ran as quickly as she could, trying desperately to find another place to lay low. The expansive hallways were a maze. Each one looked the same as the last and she had no way of knowing exactly where she was, much less knowing where to find her children or her husband. She stopped momentarily to catch her breath. Her heart pounded in her chest, as she took in gasps of air. Suddenly, she screamed in pain, as someone yanked her by the hair.

"It is unwise to try and run from me, milady. I know the layout of this entire base and there is no where you can hide," Palo said, as he pulled her against him, pressing himself against her back, as he wrapped his arm around her shoulders to keep her in place. His other hand began roaming her body, groping and touching her all over.

"No...please...no," she sobbed.

"I didn't want to hurt you my rose, but you've let me no choice," Palo said, as he pulled out a syringe and took the cap off.

"This little drug will take all the fight out of you. It's designed to lower perception and inhibitions. With this large does I'm about to give you, I could tell you I'm your husband and you won't know the difference," Palo said.

"Noooo! Let me go!" Padme screamed, as she struggled against him.

"I grow tired of your resistance," Palo growled, as he tried to hold her still enough to inject her. Suddenly, the syringe was shattered by a blaster bolt.

"Let her go, you sick bastard!" Han demanded, as he leveled his blaster at Palo.

"Get lost kid. This doesn't concern you," Palo replied.

"Take your grimy hands off her or I'll blow your head off!" Han yelled. Palo stood his ground, not believing that the kid would do it.

"Listen pal, I ain't jokin'. I'd love nothing more than to blow yur brains out, though I'd rather not do it in front of the lady, but I will if you don't let her go right now!" Han yelled.

"And how do you know that I won't use her as a human shield? If I'm going to die, then I might as well take her with me," Palo threatened.

"You really are a sick son of bitch!" Han yelled.

"Call me what you want kid, but Captain Panaka and several droids will be here in just a few minutes to escort you to a cell," Palo replied, as he tightened his arm around Padme's neck. She sunk her teeth into his arm and kicked him in the groin, before running toward Han. He took her hand and they began running.

"COME BACK HERE PADME! YO WON'T ESCAPE ME!" he screamed psychotically. Han and Padme ran through the endless

labyrinth, but they could still hear Palo screaming as he followed them.

"Han, we have to hide," Padme whispered. Han stopped and looked around. He noticed a door and pressed the panel.

"Sure hope no one's in here," Han said. Luckily, it appeared to be an empty control room. Whoever had been there previously had left. Han blasted the lock to keep them out, as Padme looked at the control panels, trying to determine where they were exactly.

"We're in luck. We're near the detention block. Do you think that's where they're keeping Lea and my children?" Padme asked.

"Probably and the Chancellor too," Han replied.

"Bail?" Padme asked.

"Yep, while your husband and Obi-Wan were fighting Severus, another Sith grabbed the Chancellor. It was Severus' job to keep Anakin away from the Senate building," Han replied, as he looked at her and noticed her lips was bleeding a little.

"Your lip is bleeding," Han said, as he dug into his pocket and handed her a cloth.

"Thanks Han," she replied, as she dabbed the blood away. Han observed the marks on her face.

"Was he hitting you?" Han asked.

"It seems to be something he's very good at doing when you don't do what he wants," Padme said.

"Miss Padme...did he...you know...rape you?" Han asked hesitantly.

"No, he was about to, but I found a way to escape by breaking a glass vase over his head," Padme replied, with a slight smile.

"I hate guys who think they gotta use their fists on a person when they get mad. He's a dead man when your husband gets a hold of him," Han said.

"Han...I know about Corellia. And I know you're father was on it when it was destroyed," Padme said, as she placed her hand on his shoulder.

"It's stupid. He didn't give a damn about me, so why should I care that he's gone?" Han asked.

"Because you're not like him. You're a good person Han and it's completely normal to have such mixed emotions toward him. Part of you loved him regardless of what he did. And the other part of you hates him for what he did. Eventually, you'll come to terms with his death and make peace. And Anakin and I'll be here for you," Padme said, as she gave him a hug. Suddenly, there was a banging on the door.

"Who is in there? PADME, OPEN THIS DOOR!" Palo demanded.

"What're we going to do?" Padme whispered.

"We're going to go out this way," Han said, referring to another exit, as he pushed on the panel.

"This should lead us to the detention block," Han said, as he pressed the panel again and extended the bridge over the abyss. Han and Padme quickly crossed. Once on the other side, Han blasted the panel and collapsed the bridge.

"That should slow him down a bit," Han replied, as they ran through the other door.

Anakin kept pushing Malina back, until she had no where to go. Malina looked into his eyes and saw that they were lit with the power of the Force.

"Your powers of the light are no match for my powers of the dark side!" Malina screamed, as she poured Force lightning into him. But she was horrified when the lightning bounced off the mysterious shield of light around the Chosen One. Her own lightning seared through her, burning and scaring her face horribly. She fell to the floor, unconscious, smoke rising off her body. Anakin could sense that she was still alive, but she was defenseless now and he turned his attention to Dooku. The Sith Master was indeed surprised by the sheer power the Chosen One possessed, though he would not let that show. It seemed that his training had only caused him to grow stronger, but Dooku was still confident that he could handle the young man. Dooku ignited his saber and circled with Anakin.

"Your skills are very impressive, but they will be no match for me," Dooku said.

"That's what your all powerful apprentice said. You've hurt too many people and I'm going to stop you...today," Anakin said, as they engaged in battle...

Han and Padme slowly peaked around the corner to the entrance to the detention block, which was being guarded by two of Tarkin's lackeys.

"Great, how are we gonna get past these jokers?" Han whispered.

"Leave that to me," Padme replied, as she prepared to go out there.

"Wait, what are you doing?" Han whispered.

"Trust me Han. Just the sight of me will have them distracted enough for you to take them both out," Padme replied.

"Sure hope you know what you're doing," Han said.

"Have a little faith in me, Han. I'm a mother who needs her children and the wife of Anakin Skywalker. These two are not going to stop

me," Padme replied.

"You Skywalkers are all crazy," he replied. Padme grinned.

"It's all a part of our charm," Padme said, as she stepped out into the corridor.

"Hold it right there!" one of the guards said, as he leveled his blaster at the lovely young woman.

"Please don't shoot," Padme pleaded, as she put her hands up.

"She's the one we just got a call about," the other said.

"Someone is looking for you. I can see why," the officer said, as his eyes roamed her body. The other man chortled.

"I'll call him and let him know we've found his little prize," the man said.

"It's really too bad we have to turn you over," the said, as he sniffed her hair, as he held her arm.

"Back off pal," Han said, as he shot the man.

"Can't let you make that call," Han said, as he shot the other man too.

"I'm impressed. They didn't even see me coming," Han said.

"Told you I knew what I was doing," Padme gave him a wink, as they headed down through the prisoner blocks.

Luke heard someone coming and looked out through the cell bars.

"Mommy!" Luke called. Han blasted the lock on the cell and the door swung open. Padme knelt down, as her twins ran into her arms.

"Oh, I missed you both so much. Are you both all right?" Padme said, as she began giving them both a look over.

"We're fine mommy. You're the one we were worried about," Leia said.

"I'm fine sweetheart and you can thank Han for that," Padme said, as she stood up and hugged Lea fiercely.

"Oh, I've been so worried. Did that monster hurt you?" Lea asked.

"Yes, but he didn't get very far and everything is going to be okay now," Padme replied, as she took her baby.

"Oh Anna...oh mommy missed you so much," Padme said, as she cuddled her youngest.

"Is she okay? Has she been fed?" Padme asked.

"I just fed her the last of the milk from her diaper satchel a couple hours ago. She's fine now, but she'll need to eat soon. I just changed her though, so she's dry," Lea replied.

"Well, as soon as we get somewhere safe, I can feed her," Padme said.

"It's good to see you safe Padme," Bail said.

"You too Bail," Padme replied.

"We need to get outta here, before someone finds us," Han said.

"Where should we go?" Lea asked.

"We go to the ship and lock ourselves in until Anakin and Obi-Wan come," Han suggested.

"Han's right. Hold hands and follow Han," Padme told the twins, as she followed right behind them. Lea picked Jeena up and she and

Bail followed...

"We made it," Han said, as they finally entered the docking bay where the Sapphire Angel sat, after traveling through the endless hallways for nearly an hour. Anna began to whimper and Padme knew she was getting hungry.

"Hold on baby...just a few more minutes and mommy will feed you," Padme soothed her, as they headed toward the ship. Suddenly, the docking bay door slammed shut and dozens of armed droids surrounded them. Padme and the others whirled around, only to find Palo, Panaka, Jamilla, and Tarkin standing there.

"You're not going anywhere Padme...none of you are. Drop the blaster kid," Palo said, as several of the droids leveled their blasters at him. Han gritted his teeth and dropped his weapon. Padme held her baby close, as Palo slowly approached her. The twins clung to her legs, determined not to let this man near their mother.

"It's time for you to pay for your resistance, Padme," Palo said.

"Stay away from us..." Padme hissed, as they continued to back away from him. She prayed to the Force that Anakin and Obi-Wan would come for them soon...

Victory For the Light

Disclaimer: It's George's sandbox. I just play here, because it's fun!

AN: Here's chapter 24! Thanks for all the great reviews!

Never Gone II

Chapter 24: Victory For the Light

Obi-Wan watched with bated breath, as Anakin fought the Sith Master furiously. Their sabers swirled and clashed at a break neck speed, neither willing to give an inch of ground to the other. Obi-Wan stared at the control panel on the arm of Dooku's chair. He had to figure out how to turn off the ray shields and help Anakin. He had no doubt that the younger man could indeed defeat Dooku, but the Sith Master would not fight fairly if he was in danger of losing the battle. Obi-Wan ignited his blade and began swiping at the shield around him. He hoped that the power from his light saber would eventually clash with the power of the ray shields and short out the machinery that was controlling it. But so far, it was not working.

"You're wasting your time, Master Kenobi," Dooku called, as he continued to battle the Chosen One. Anakin charged at Dooku, and their sabers crashed together in a brilliant array of sparks. They met in a deadlock, and their sabers hummed and crackled on contact. They engaged each other again, as Obi-Wan looked on. They fought their way up an incline and to a higher platform, above the main level of the bridge. Dooku Force shoved Anakin back hard against the wall. The Sith's hands glowed with blue energy, as he hurtled Force lightning at the young man. Anakin raised his saber and began absorbing it. Once the attack was deflected, Anakin charged at Dooku, kicking him over the railing. Anakin hopped over after the aging Sith. Their sabers clashed in a dead lock with the familiar hums and crackling pops.

"You are formidable indeed. Yoda, Mace, and Obi-Wan have all taught you well. However, it was for naught," Dooku taunted.

"You still focus your feelings on that useless woman. It shall be your downfall," Dooku taunted, as they pulled their sabers out of the dead lock. Anakin took a breath and brought his saber over his head, before bringing it down fiercely on Dooku, who met it with his own saber. Their sabers continued to clash, before meeting in struggle again.

"Your complete overconfidence in the power of the dark side will be yours Dooku, as will underestimating the power of love," Anakin answered his taunt, as he clashed vigorously with the Sith Master...

Palo stared evilly at her, as she kept backing away, as he approached. Palo pointed his blaster at Lea and motioned for her.

"Take the youngest brat from her now!" he ordered. Tears streamed down Lea's face, as she was forced to do as he said. Tears cascaded down Padme's cheeks, as she handed her baby to Lea.

"It'll be all right...they'll get to us in time," Lea tried to reassure her, though it was reassurance for herself as well.

"Back away now," Palo ordered. Lea did so, for the sake of the children's safety and her own as well. Palo pointed his blaster at both of the twins and Padme knelt down beside them.

"Angels...you need to go over there with Aunt Lea," Padme told them.

"No..." Leia refused.

"We're not leaving you mommy," Luke said, as he clung tighter.

"Pry those brats away or they're dead," Palo ordered.

"Please, they're just children," Padme pleaded. Jamilla approached and grabbed Leia by the arm, dragging her away.

"NOOOO!" Leia screamed. Luke clung tightly to Padme and tried not to flinch, as Palo glared down at him.

"Get lost kid," Palo growled at him. Luke glared at him and kicked him in the shin.

"Aaarrgh, you little brat!" Palo said, as he grabbed a fistful of Luke's hair.

"Nooo, please, just leave him alone!" Padme said, as she held her son tightly.

"Get rid of the brat and come with me, and maybe I won't hurt you," Palo threatened.

"You're a coward," Luke said boldly. By now, Palo was seeing red.

"What...did you call me?" he asked, as he grit his teeth.

"A coward. That's what daddy says you are. Only cowards hit girls and kids," Luke said bravely. Palo heard Han snort in amusement.

"The kid's right. You gotta let the Sith do the dirty work, cause you wouldn't last sixty seconds in a fight with Anakin," Han taunted. Palo pointed his blaster at Han.

"Shut up, you little whelp," Palo growled.

"Whatcha gonna do? Shoot me? Go ahead, since it'll just prove what a coward you really are," Han taunted.

"You're so jealous of Anakin, you can't even see past your own nose," Bail added.

"SHUT UP!" Palo screamed.

"New plan, my sweet. Before I take you to my ship, I'm going to take you up to the bridge, so you witness your husband's murder!" Palo screamed.

"Oh and bring the little brat with you. I'm sure he'd love to see it as well," Palo said.

"Luke, I need you to go over there with Leia," Padme pleaded. But Luke steadfastly refused.

"Daddy told me once that if he wasn't here that it was my job to protect you and Leia and Anna," Luke said. Padme felt her heart melt at Luke's selfless love.

"Oh Luke...I know. Daddy is going to be so proud of you. But mommy needs you to protect Leia and Anna right now," Padme replied.

"Han can do that mommy. I'm not leaving you," Luke said, as he clung to her. Padme hugged him tightly and stood up, lifting him into her arms.

"I love you so much, my little prince," Padme said. Palo pressed his blaster to Luke's head, as he grabbed Padme's arm tightly.

"Now move, or he's going to be a dead little prince," Palo said. Padme glared and began walking, with Palo right behind her...

Palo shoved Padme onto the bridge. Her eyes immediately locked on her husband, who was above them, fighting Dooku on a network of narrow catwalks and spires.

"Padme?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Obi-Wan. What are those blue things around you?" she asked.

"Ray shields. Dooku doesn't want my interference," Obi-Wan replied.

"We have a ring side seat to watch your husband's demise," Palo said, as he held her tightly by the arm.

"I wouldn't be so confident if I were you. Anakin will defeat Dooku and then you'll be next," Obi-Wan retorted. Palo glared at him and kept his hold on Padme. Padme looked at Obi-wan, who kept glancing down at the chair he was next to. She followed his eyes and saw the red button he was looking at. Palo seemed distracted by the battle at the moment, so she carefully whispered something to Luke.

"Mommy needs you to do something for her. See that red button on the arm of that chair?" she whispered. Luke nodded.

"Can you go press that button sweetie? It'll make the shield around uncle Obi-Wan go away," Padme said. He nodded.

"Okay, go really fast and come right back," Padme told him, as she let him down. Luke ran to the chair and pressed the button, freeing Obi-Wan from the ray shields.

"You'll regret that, brat," Malina snarled. She had managed to pull herself up. Her face was horribly burned and scarred. She lifted her hand and shot Force lighting toward the boy. Obi-Wan leapt in front of him and caught the attack with his light saber. Luke watched in amazement, as his uncle absorbed the lightning with his saber.

"Luke!" Padme called for him.

"Forget the kid...we're leaving," Palo said, as he tugged her toward the lift. She knew Palo was scared that the Sith would lose, so he was going to try and get her on his ship and get away. Padme dug her heals into the floor and tried to pull away from him.

"No...I'm not going anywhere with you!" Padme screamed, as she kicked him. He growled in pain.

"Damn you!" he screamed, as he backhanded her hard. She yelped in pain and hit the floor, landing on her stomach. Padme whimpered

painfully and held her face.

"Mommy! Why'd you hit my mommy!" Luke screamed, as he started hitting Palo's legs with his fists...

Dooku Force jumped to the next catwalk and Anakin followed him their sabers clashed furiously again and again. He heard Padme's screams and he knew he had to find the strength to end this madness...

Malina's strikes were sloppy and almost incoherent, as she tried in vain to fight Obi-Wan. But the injuries she sustained in her fight with Anakin were taking a toll on her, for the pain in her scarred face was immense. Obi-Wan took pity on her and with a swift stroke, he passed his light saber through her neck, killing her instantly...

Dooku saw his last apprentice fall.

"It's over Dooku," Anakin stated.

"You really think I will fall as easily as my worthless apprentices'? It's not over you, you young fool...not until I am holding your head as my trophy," Dooku snarled. Anakin heard Padme scream again and he quickly reached out to her with his feelings. She reached back and he let her love wash over him. Her love replenished his strength and he let himself be filled with the light of the Force.

" *You are the Chosen One...Anakin. The power of the light side is inside you. Love is the key to unlock it,"* Qui-Gon's ghostly voice instructed. Anakin focused his feelings on the people he loved. But most of all, he focused on his love for Padme and his children. He focused on those loving memories in his heart that no amount of evil could destroy.

" *You're never gone Ani, because in my heart is where you are,"*

Those were the words Padme had spoken to him many times over the years and they had always held true. A bright, intense light surrounded him, as the Forced merged with its Chosen warrior. But it was different this time, for it had never been this powerful before.

"Your powers of the light are no match for the dark side! Not this time, Skywalker!" Dooku yelled, as a massive amount of Force lightning exploded from his fingertips...

"Get away from me, you little brat," Palo yelled, as he shoved Luke away. Luke landed on his rear and crawled to his mother.

"Mommy, are you okay?" Luke asked. Padme pulled herself up and onto her side.

"I'm fine baby, come here," Padme said, as she pulled her little boy into her arms. Luke noticed that his uncle's eyes had become fixated above them after he had killed the other Sith. Luke looked up and gasped.

"Mommy, look at daddy!" Luke said, in awe. Padme looked up and watched in wonder.

Anakin finally understood what Qui-Gon had meant by unlocking his power. It was the same thing Master Yoda had been teaching him to do in their meditation sessions. It was the same reason Master Windu put him through grueling eight-hour training sessions. It was so he could harness the power and control it. He realized that the aura of light around him wasn't just a shield. It had the potential to be harnessed and used as a weapon, just like a light saber...only one hundred times more powerful. Anakin focused on the power around him and drew it into his hands. Instead of Dooku's lightning hitting his shield, it was now fighting against the beam of light pouring from Anakin's palms. This was the true physical manifestation of the light side of the Force. Just as lightning was the physical manifestation of

the dark side. Dooku's eyes bled Sithly yellow, as he realized he was about to die by the hands of the Chosen One.

"There will always be more. Evil will never truly die," Dooku taunted.

"Not if I can do anything about it," Anakin answered, his eyes lit with the light of the Force.

"You are the Chosen One of the light side. I was the Chosen One of the dark side. It will choose another to do its evil bidding eventually," Dooku said.

"You were NOT chosen for anything. You're just an evil bastard bent on destroying the galaxy and hurting the people I love. It ends today..." Anakin said, as he intensified his power. The beam of light vanquished his stream of Force lightning and hit the Sith head on. Dooku screamed, as the light burned through his chest and came out his back. The dead body of the evil Count Dooku fell from the catwalk and to the cold floor below...

As Dooku's body fell, Padme hit Luke's eyes on her shoulder.

"Close your eyes, baby," she told him. Padme yelped, as Palo ripped her away from Luke and began desperately dragging her toward the lift, as Anakin's feet landed on the dura steel floor.

"You have less than three seconds to take your hands off her!" Anakin yelled. The look in Palo's eyes at that moment could only be described as completely psychotic. He laughed maniacally, as he pulled her into the lift and hit the down arrow. Anakin suppressed a growl.

"He's a dead man," Anakin said, as he raised his comlink to his lips.

"Artoo, bring elevator 31176 to a halt...now!" Anakin ordered. Artoo whirled affirmatively in response and shut the elevator down.

"Stay here with Obi-Wan," Anakin told his son, as he ruffled Luke's hair and opened the elevator door. Gathering the Force around him, he jumped down and floated himself several feet down and onto the top of the lift. Luke stuck his head in the door and watched his father land on the top of the elevator.

"Wow!" Luke said in excitement. Obi-Wan smiled and tugged Luke back by the collar.

"All right young one, that's enough. We can't have you falling," Obi-Wan said, as he hoisted his nephew into his arms.

"We shall wait here for your mother and father, all right?" Obi-Wan said. Luke nodded.

"Why the hell have we stopped!" Palo screamed, as he kept pressing the button.

"It's over Palo," Padme stated. Palo glared at her and was about to retort, until they heard a loud thud above them. A blue blade pierced through the metal and began cutting a hole. Anakin grabbed the circle of metal he'd cut out and tossed it away. He dropped down into the lift and glared at Palo, who held a blaster to his wife's head.

"I'll kill her...I swear. If I can't have her...then neither will you! She's mine! You stole her from me!" he ranted. Anakin said nothing and Palo gasped, as the barrel on his blaster was completely crushed. Palo screamed in pain, as it suddenly felt like his hands were being crushed. Padme was released and she ran into her husband's arms. He scooped her up and spun her around, hugging her tightly. Anakin stroked her face gently, seeing the red marks where Palo had hit her various times. His blue eyes turned to ice, as he turned his attention toward Palo, who was cowering in the corner. Anakin lifted him with the Force and slammed him against the wall.

"How dare you hit her! You won't ever lay a hand on her again!" Anakin yelled.

"Go to hell, Skywalker. You won't kill me...I'm defenseless," Palo taunted.

"Defenseless men don't hit an innocent woman and defenseless men don't stalk and haunt an innocent woman," Anakin said angrily. Palo screamed in pain, as he felt like the bones in his legs were being crushed.

"Defenseless men don't try to rape my wife and kill my children," Anakin said, as he glared intently at Palo. Palo held his chest and screamed in immense pain, as blood leaked from his mouth. There was one last blood curdling scream, before Palo crumpled to the floor...dead. Anakin had crushed his heart, feeling that it was no more than he deserved for all the pain he'd inflicted on Padme. He took his cloak off and covered the body, before Padme leapt into his arms.

"It's over angel...it's over," he assured her, as she softly cried in relief. He was gone...he would never torment her again. Anakin brushed her tears away, before guiding her lips into a passionate kiss. Padme sighed in content, as his lips moved over hers. It felt so right when he kissed her and everything else melted away. Suddenly, they heard two thumps on the roof and soon, they could see Luke's legs dangling through the opening. Anakin laughed and pulled him down.

"Hi daddy," Luke said. Anakin ruffled his hair.

"Hi Luke. I'm very proud of you for trying to protect mommy for me," Anakin told him. Luke smiled bashfully.

"Are all the bad people gone?" he asked.

"They're gone Luke. They can't hurt any of us anymore," Anakin replied, just as Obi-Wan managed to climb down. He pointed at Anakin in annoyance.

"You or your son are going to be the death of me. Damned Skywalker impatience. He just couldn't wait until you came back for us...no, no, no, we had to bloody jump down an elevator shaft to come after you!" Obi-Wan complained. Anakin and Padme laughed.

"Just think, you'll be taking him as your padawan in a few years," Anakin said. Obi-Wan crossed his arms.

"No way in bloody hell. I don't have a death wish," he replied. Anakin laughed.

"Ah come on, you know you love us," Anakin replied.

"Yes I do. I think I shall have Bant examine my head when we return to the Temple," Obi-Wan tried to say it with a straight face, but failed miserably. Anakin and Padme burst out laughing, as Anakin raised the comlink to his lips.

"Artoo, you can bring the elevator down now," Anakin told him.

Anakin maneuvered the Sapphire Angel to a safe distance from the Death Star. Upon arrival in the docking bay, they arrested Tarkin, Panaka, and Jamilla and secured them on the ship. Then, he and Obi-Wan traveled to the reactor and placed an implosion device on it, before they boarded the ship and left. Anakin unbuckled his belt and went to the back of the ship where everyone was waiting for the fireworks.

"Okay Artoo, detonate in minus three seconds," Anakin said into his comlink. All four of the children were sleeping, Anna being the last one to go down after Padme fed her. Bail and Han had also retired to the cabin for some rest. Obi-Wan held Lea close, as they clung to each other, immensely glad just to be in each others arms. Obi-Wan kissed her passionately, just before the Death Star exploded in a brilliant array of light and fire. Padme clung to Anakin, as they watched the monstrosity be destroyed and she knew then it was finally over. Padme closed her eyes, as her husband drew her lips

into a searing kiss, letting her feel all the love he held for her in his heart. Padme responded eagerly, letting him feel her passion as well. A few moments and several passionate embraces later, the two couples strapped in for the jump to hyperspace.

"Artoo, set our course for Coruscant and take us to hyperspace," Anakin said into his comlink, as he held his wife in his arms. The stars streaked past them, as the Sapphire Angel began the journey home...

The final chapter should be out in a few days! Let me know what you thought of this chapter:)

Peace Reigns Again

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars.

AN: Here's chapter 25! Thanks for all the great reviews!

Never Gone II:

Chapter 25: Peace Reigns Again

Upon their arrival on Coruscant, everyone was exhausted. It was a challenge fighting their way through the sea of Holonet reporters. Chancellor Organa was clearly exhausted as well and promised them a press conference in a few days to answer their questions. There was much to do and talk about in the aftermath of Dooku's short, but no less devastating reign of terror. But for the next couple days until then, much rest and relaxation would be taken. These few days were spent together as a family. The morning of the third day since they returned. Anakin and Obi-Wan left early that morning for a Council meeting. Padme was up to see Anakin off, while the twins slept in. Padme changed and fed Anna, before spreading a blanket out on the floor for her with some toys. She was just learning to roll over and was content with that and a few colorful rattle toys. Padme sat on the sofa, just a few inches away, sipping at her morning caf. She rolled her eyes, as she read through the various stories on the Holonet news. All were speculated and ridiculously untrue. She knew that her and Anakin's presence at the press conference would be required later today for no other reason that to quell the outrageous rumors floating around. By Republic law, the actual licensed news agencies were required to report the truth once it was provided to them. This was Bail's exact reason for holding the press conference in the first place. Of course, nothing could or would stop the gossip and otherwise unlicensed agencies from spreading their trashy rumors. Fortunately, most people knew that you could not put any trust in the gossip rags. She rolled her eyes again and switched the datapad off.

"Good morning Miss Padme." Han said.

"Good morning Han," Padme replied, with a soft smile. Anna make herself known with a sharp yell.

"Good morning to you too squirt," Han replied. Anna grinned at him and went back to playing. Even at only three months old, she wanted to be acknowledged. Padme insisted that this was something she got from her daddy.

"Han, I don't think I've had the chance to thank you for rescuing me from Palo," Padme said.

"It was nothing. Besides, I got us captured again," Han replied.

"But you stopped him from giving me that drug. He would have raped me if it hadn't been for you. Anakin and I are both very grateful to you. You were brave and you helped protect my children as well. We will never forget that Han," Padme said.

"Well...yur the only mother figure I've ever known. I couldn't just let that sicko hurt you," Hab said. Padme smiled warmly at his concern, as she saw Luke come in.

"Good morning sweetheart," Padme said, as he came up and hugged her.

"Love you mommy," he said.

"Oh, I love you too, my little prince," Padme replied.

"Where's daddy?" Luke asked.

"He and uncle Obi-Wan had a Council meeting. They'll be back soon. Are you hungry?" Padme asked. He nodded.

"Okay. Why don't you go wake Leia and mommy will make breakfast," Padme said. Luke nodded and ran off to wake his sister.

"And that was how I defeated Dooku," Anakin concluded. He and Obi-Wan had just finished telling the Council everything that transpired aboard the Death Star.

"Amazing. And Padme and the children are all right?" Aayla asked. Anakin smiled.

"Yes. They are safe. Palo can never hurt her again," Anakin said.

"He did not...hurt her?" Shaak Ti asked vaguely, but Anakin knew what kind of harm she was referring to.

"He did physically abuse her when she fought him...but he did not get far enough. I owe Han Solo a great deal for rescuing her before he could...rape her. My son also deserves much credit. He protected his mother as best he could, even when Palo threatened his life," Anakin said. Mace looked surprised.

"Your five-year-old protected her? Mace asked. Obi-Wan smiled.

"Young Luke was determined not to let this man hurt his mother. He was very brave, especially for his age," Obi-Wan replied. Yoda chuckled.

"Picked the wrong wife and mother, this man did I think. Never stood a chance, did he?" Yoda chuckled. Anakin smiled.

"You're right master. He definitely picked the wrong family to mess with," Anakin replied.

"Vanquished the Sith, you have again Anakin and Obi-Wan. Owe you both everything, the galaxy does," Yoda said. Anakin and Obi-Wan bowed gratefully.

"Thank you master," Obi-Wan replied.

"However, correct Dooku was. Always evil there will be, as long as there is good. Let ourselves become arrogant and complacent again,

we will not. Teach our future generations to be prepared for anything, we will," Yoda said. Everyone nodded in agreement.

"This session is dismissed. We will see you both tonight at the Chancellor's gala, which is being held if your honor," Mace said. Anakin and Obi-Wan nodded. They had insisted that such extravagance was not necessary, but there was no stopping Bail and his wife.

That afternoon, Padme joined them at Bail's press conference. After answering a multitude of questions, they returned home to prepare for that evening's gala.

Luke was dressed in his formal clothes and waited patiently next to his father. Han came out of his room, looking a little uncomfortable in the nice formal clothes Padme had got for him, which were similar to Luke's and Anakin's.

"You look nice Han," Anakin assured him.

"Thanks. I kinda feel funny going to this thing though," Han said.

"Han, you save Padme when I couldn't get to her. I will be forever grateful to you for that and I will never forget it," Anakin told him, as he patted the young man's shoulder. Leia came out wearing a pretty white dress, with her hair up in braids. She twirled and Anakin smiled.

"You look beautiful, princess," Anakin said, as he kissed her cheek.

"Thank you daddy," she replied.

"Yeah, you clean up good kid," Han said. Leia smiled.

"Thank you Han. You're not so bad after all," Leia said. Anakin walked to the bedroom to find Padme. He peaked in and saw that Dorme was finishing her hair. Dorme was watching Anna for them

this evening and she picked up the baby, after Padme kissed her and exited the room. Anakin stared at the beauty that was his wife. She was absolutely stunning in her white dress. It was long and sleek, hugging her curves in all the right places. It was sleeveless, with the straps fastening around her neck, creating a teardrop shaped collar. It had a low cut back and it shimmered in the light. Her hair was up in a matching band, while her curls cascaded down from where they were fastened.

"Well, what do you think?" she asked.

"You...wow...you look like the angel that you are. One might say that you're missing your wings. But I know I know that you're just hiding them, so that know one will know," he replied. She didn't think it was still possible to blush from his comments after being married for almost seven years, but again, he proved her wrong, as her cheeks turned pink at his words. He closed the distance between them and captured her lips in a passionate kiss. Padme moaned into his kiss, as he tilted his head and moved his lips hungrily over hers. Padme giggled, as his kisses moved down to the nape of her neck.

"Down boy...there'll be plenty of time for that tonight," she told him.

"Mmm...promise?" he asked.

"Of course. Besides, since it will likely be late when we get home, Dorme is moving Anna's bassinet into her room for the night instead of waking her when we get home," Padme said. He smiled slyly.

"Remind me to thank her in the morning," he replied.

"Are you ready?" he asked. She nodded and took his arm.

Later, at Chancellor Organa's gala, he stepped up to the podium to make his speech.

"We have all gathered here tonight, because we have much to celebrate. Just days ago, our great Republic was once again threatened by those who wish to destroy our peaceful and prosperous galaxy. Many lives were lost," Bail paused for a moment out of respect to the deceased.

"But many more were saved, thanks to the gallant efforts of Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi. They had assistance from two young people I would like to honor as well. Han Solo and young Luke Skywalker," Padme smiled and calmly stood up, as Bail walked out carrying a case. He opened the case and Padme picked up the first medal. She placed it around Obi-Wan's neck and hugged him.

"Anakin and I owe you so much Obi-Wan. You've always been there for us," Padme told him.

"You owe me nothing Padme. We are family and I would do anything for any of you," Obi-Wan replied, with a gentle smile. Padme smiled and wiped a tear away. She picked up another medal and placed it around Han's neck, before hugging him tightly.

"I owe you a lot too Han and I'll never forget everything you did," Padme said.

"I'd do it all again...in a heartbeat Miss Padme," Han replied. She smiled and kissed his cheek, making him blush. Next, she took another medal and knelt down to her son. She placed it around his neck and kissed his cheek.

"Mommy and daddy are so proud of you sweetheart. You were so brave," Padme said, as she wiped another tear away.

"I love you mommy," Luke said, as he hugged her.

"I love you too Luke," she replied. She finally moved her husband and felt fresh tears misting in her eyes. She placed the last medal around his neck and hugged him tightly, bringing her lips close to his ear.

"I love you so much. You're my hero Ani...I couldn't live without you," she said, as she clung to him.

"I love you too. You're everything to me too angel," Anakin replied, as he brushed her tears away. She leaned in and kissed him softly.

"Freedom and peace are not something we will take for granted again. We will never forget the sacrifice of those innocent lives and we will honor those that died for us," the Chancellor concluded. There was applause and then the music and mingling began.

"May I have this dance, milady?" Anakin asked, as he kissed her hand.

"You may, handsome Knight," she replied, as she let him lead her onto the dance floor.

"Han, would you mind sitting here with the children for a bit?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Not at all. Go ahead," Han replied. Obi-Wan held his hand out to Lea and pulled her up.

"Do you feel up to a dance, darling?" he asked, his beautiful, pregnant wife.

"Of course, my love," she replied, as he led her to the dance floor. The night grew late and the gala slowly winded down. The Skywalker's and Kenobi's returned to their homes and put their sleeping children to bed.

As Padme entered their bedroom, she let her hair down and shook her curls out. Anakin came up behind her, burying his face in the curls around her neck and kissing her softly. He wrapped his arms around her slender waist and kissed her soft lips. She sighed in contentment and turned in her husband's embrace. His lips descended on hers again in a deeply, passionate kiss. Anakin's

fingers found the fastening clip at the back of her neck and undid it, which released the straps of her dress. Padme kissed him with wanton, as his hands caressed her through her dress. Anakin raised his hand his hand and dimmed the lights with the Force, as their eternal passion for each other burned brightly and took them under its spell...

"I love you angel," Anakin said, as he kissed her.

"I love you too, my handsome Knight," Padme whispered, as they came together, just as they would be for all time...

Six Months later...

The Skywalker and Kenobi families stood together on the landing platform. Lea cradled she and Obi-Wan's newborn baby boy. He had been born a month earlier and they had named him Jayden-Jinn Kenobi. Today, however, was a bittersweet day for them, as they were here to see Han Solo off. Thanks to Anakin's stellar recommendation he'd wrote for him, Han was given a position on a Republic cruiser for the army. He would be traveling the galaxy with them, performing various missions and duties for his superiors. It was a great opportunity that Han couldn't refuse, especially since Lando had also been offered a position alongside him. Padme hugged him tightly, sad to see him go, but happy for him as well.

"We're going to miss you so much. You don't be a stranger and you keep in touch, all right?" she made him promise.

"I promise. I'll visit as often as I can," he promised back. Anna babbled at him and he kissed her head affectionately.

"I'll miss you too squirt," he told her. Anakin held his hand out and Han shook it.

"Thanks again Anakin," Han said.

"There's no need to thank me Han. You got that job all on your own," Anakin replied, as he hugged him. Han knelt down beside the twins and they hugged him.

"We'll miss you Han," Luke said.

"Hey, this ain't goodbye forever," Han said to their pouting faces.

"Promise?" Leia asked.

"Promise kid. We'll meet again," he replied. Han waved goodbye, before he got on his transport. Baby Jayden began to whimper and Lea rocked him gently.

"I think someone is hungry," Lea said. Obi-Wan kissed her cheek and waved to Anakin.

"We'll see you back home later," Obi-Wan said. Anakin nodded, as they continued to wait for Han's transport to take off.

"I'm really going to miss him," Padme said.

"I know. He's really matured in the last year. He's going to be fine," Anakin replied, as he wrapped his arm around her waist. The Skywalker family waited till Han's transport had taken off and was out of sight, before they headed back to the speeder. They strapped the twins and Anna into the back, before getting into the front seat.

"Mommy, I'm hungry," Luke said.

"You're always hungry," Leia rolled her eyes.

"Am not,"

"Are too,"

"Am not,"

"Are too,"

"Am not,"

"All right you two, we'll go get something to eat," Padme said.

"Maaammaa!" Anna babbled.

"Are you hungry too sweetie?" Padme asked.

"Daaadaa!" she called to get Anakin's attention.

"I say that's a yes. Let's go swing by and pick up Uncle Obi-Wan and Aunt Jeena. Then we'll all go to Dex's," Anakin suggested. The twins cheered and Padme smiled at him.

"That sounds great sweetheart," Padme said.

"Well, we have a lot to celebrate," he replied.

"Yes we do. It's a miracle that we're all together," Padme said.

"No, it's the will of the Force, angel. We're always going to be together," he replied.

"Promise?" she whispered.

"I promise," he replied, as he kissed her softly, before turning back to the controls.

"Okay, is everyone ready?" Anakin asked. His three children gave him their enthusiastic responses. Padme smiled at him and clutched his free hand in her own. He smiled warmly at her, as he took the speeder up and into the air. There was one thing that was certain in all their hearts. The Skywalker family would always be together and never gone from each other...ever.

The End...for now...

That's right...there will be a Never Gone III. It is still in the very early stages of development, so it will likely be a month or two before it

debuts. But I can tell you for sure, it will begin fifteen years after this one. In the meantime, I will be continuing Forever Destined and starting a new fic that is titled 'Burning Vendetta'. It is another complete AU and I'm really excited about it. I hope to have the first chapter up next week sometime. I just want to thank everyone who reviewed NG II. I hope you all enjoyed reading it as much I enjoyed writing it. Thanks to everyone again!

Special thanks to Lea-Lynn and Pyramid for always letting me bounce ideas off you. You guys are the best:)

Also thanks to all my reviewers! You guys make this fun!

Mo Angel

bluemoongirl27

Saiya-Jin Queen

MeyaRose

AnaDry

MissNaye

Obsessed Jedi Master

Kaptain Kristi

Jed Knight 13

Harry2

Padme52

ILDV

Jedi Master Arie Skywalker

Haydenfan89

Episode Skywalker

waiting4haykin

LokiGirl

mrs.christensen247

DeathZealot

BabaBip

famous escape

GLCW2

thunderbird

toocissy4yew

hermia123

myladykenobi

baby blonde

DelilahDeanSkywalker

bahjcb